

Horrors - Ghosts, Ghouls, and Other Beastly Sorts

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The Man In The Marylebone Road

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Ghosts I Have Seen*, by Violet Tweedale

It is thirty years ago since I became a convert to Spiritualism. At that time I made up my mind that I would attend fifty séances, and if, out of that number, I did not come across one that I could be absolutely certain was genuine I would attend no more. Spiritualism, in itself, never interested me, but I was determined to see for myself if there was really anything in it.

I attended twenty-nine séances before I happened on one that was absolutely convincing. Several had been almost convincing, but a loophole for fraud had remained, and so long as that was the case I persevered.

I went one summer morning to see an old man who lived in the Marylebone Road. I was shown up into a sunny little room on the first floor. It had neither carpet, curtains nor window blind, and it looked on the street. The furniture consisted of a plain, uncovered deal table in the middle of a clean planked floor, and eight plain uncovered deal chairs were ranged round the walls. The room was utterly destitute of ornament, there was not even a clock, and I was the only occupant.

Soon the old man entered, a very ordinary looking person, and civilly asked what I wanted.

I said that I understood he was possessed of psychic powers, and I would like to see an exhibition of them.

He smiled and answered, "My fee is two-and-six for a quarter of an hour. Choose your own phenomenon, and I'll see what I can do."

I was puzzled at first, and looked round the bare walls for inspiration. There was not even a photograph or picture. Then suddenly I thought of something rather silly.

"Please make those four chairs opposite to us cross the floor and mount on to the table," I said.

The old man drew his chair quite close to mine, "Then give me your hand." I removed my glove and did as he asked.

He looked, not at the chairs, but into my face, and I at once warned him.

"I am no good as a subject for hypnotism, so it is useless to try."

He laughed and answered, "I am not a hypnotist, but I see you have power. You may as well lend me some. You are young, and I am old."

At that second my attention was distracted by a grating sound, and I forgot all about my companion. I saw the four chairs leave the wall and advance towards the table, in exactly the position, and tilted forward, they would be in if a human hand was dragging them across the floor. There appeared to be four invisible hands at the work. Then, one by one, they were neatly balanced, one on the top of the other, on the table.

When the manifestation was complete I remembered the old man, and looked round at him. He was watching the business, as keenly interested as I was.

"Good boys! good boys," I heard him murmur.

"How is it done?" I asked him.

He shrugged. "The Petris (spirits) do it. I don't."

"Then ask 'the Petris' to put the chairs neatly back again."

"The Petris" performed this feat very expeditiously, and I paid two-and-sixpence and departed. There was no loophole here for fraud, not a wire, or string, or any human manipulation, and I was not hypnotized. I never have been. For that sort of test I had seen enough.

Shortly after I witnessed a materialization in broad daylight. I was

free to move about the room, and stand by the medium as she lay bound and deeply entranced. I was free to make any examinations I pleased, whilst others present conversed with the spirit, and I left the house absolutely convinced of the genuineness of that phenomenon.

That was the last test séance I attended, and for years afterwards I did not interest myself in spiritualism, nor did I attend many private sittings.

Towards the close of the South African War I was ordered from "the other side" to begin again, but on different lines. I was ordered to be a medium.

A man whom I barely knew, and who had passed over, wished to communicate with his people. This put me in a quandary. I hardly knew his people, and their social position was not such as could be treated unceremoniously by a casual acquaintance. I had never heard that they were interested in "other side" subjects. The very little I knew of them suggested quite the reverse.

I consulted with my husband. "One cannot," I argued, "go up to people who are almost strangers and tell them their son wishes to communicate with them through me."

My husband quite saw the difficulty, but it had always happened that when any one wished to communicate with us, and we paid no attention, we were given no peace till we did take heed, and sat down with an Ouija board to receive the message. He therefore proposed that we should consult Mr. A. P. Sinnett, now such a well-known writer on Occultism, and an old friend of ours. We therefore laid the matter before him.

His reply was uncompromising.

"Do as you are told from the other side. It is not for you to question or consider the social consequences to yourselves."

This advice we immediately followed, and we were met with the utmost kindness and sympathetic understanding. Sittings were arranged, communication established. Test questions were put, which we did not understand, but which were satisfactory to the questioners, and for many years the sittings continued until the "other side" made arrangements for a change of mediums and I was set free for other work. I say, set free, because during all those years we had held ourselves entirely at the disposal of this wonderful spirit, who communicated through me, and it is no exaggeration to say that our daily lives, our worldly plans, entirely depended upon his wishes. He had his own work to do, and our earth lives were always arranged to suit his convenience.

About the same time as the above experience began my husband was

disturbed by noises in his library, and he came to the conclusion that some one had something to say and was determined to say it. One evening, when the disturbance prevented serious reading, we sat down with the Ouija board. The result was as follows--

A spirit who purported to be a well-known soldier of fortune who had lately committed suicide, desired to give a message. This astonished us, as we had known him only slightly, and we wondered why he had chosen to bestow his attentions on us. He said he was very unhappy because he owed a certain sum of money to a friend, whom I will call B. This money B. could have refunded to him if he would communicate with a certain London address, which the departed soldier gave us in full.

We knew B., and knew that he had been a close friend of the departed. We also knew that B. was on the Gold Coast. We promised, however, to send him the message, and that was the last we ever heard of the soldier.

My husband wrote to B. on the Gold Coast simply giving him the message and leaving it at that. We were sure B. was an absolute skeptic. He was! and did nothing till his return to England three years later, when he applied at the address which he happened to have kept, and received his money.

I first became interested in Occultism, not only through my own very early experiences, but through hearing as a mere child that my grandfather, Robert the younger of the two well-known publishing brothers, W. and R. Chambers, had investigated spiritualism to his entire satisfaction.

In those days, about 1860, scientific men did not trouble about occult subjects, which were deemed beneath their notice. Science was so strictly orthodox that my grandfather published his "Vestiges of Creation" anonymously. It created an enormous sensation, and upon that book and the writings of Lamarck, Darwin founded his "Origin of Species." Robert Chambers determined to go to America and investigate for himself the reported marvelous happenings there. He had sittings with all the renowned mediums, bringing to bear upon their phenomena the acumen of his scientific mind, and he returned to Europe a convinced believer. He carried on regular sittings with Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall and other intellectuals, and with General Drayson, then a young beginner who went very far in his investigations before he died.

About the year 1885 I happened to be staying at Hawarden with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and the only other guest, outside the family party, was the late Canon Malcolm McColl, through whose instrumentality I became a member of the Psychical Society.

McColl was a most interesting personality, a leading light on matters occult, and a famous recounter of ghost stories. He was also _persona

grata_ in the Gladstone household, and Mrs. Gladstone often spoke to me of their deep love for him.

I forget now what led up to the subject, but one night, when we were sitting talking, I told Mr. Gladstone that my grandfather, Robert Chambers, had been a convinced spiritualist. The Canon at once tried to draw the G.O.M., and to our mutual amazement his arguments in favor of the return of the disembodied soul to earth were met by concurring short ejaculations, such as "Of course! Naturally! Why, certainly!"

Then quite suddenly Mr. Gladstone began to prove to us that the old Biblical scribes were convinced spiritualists. From his intimate knowledge of the Bible he quoted text after text in support of his contention. "Here He worked no wonders because the people were wanting in faith," he compared to the present day medium's difficulty in working with skeptics. When Christ asked, "Who has touched Me? Much virtue has passed out of Me," He but spoke as many a modern healer speaks on feeling a failure of power. "Try the spirits whether they be of God," is what all spiritualists of to-day should practice rigorously.

Conan Doyle, in his book, "The New Revelation," touches upon those facts, and it was only on reading his book with profound interest that I remembered the impressive talk I had so many years ago with Mr. Gladstone. As Conan Doyle truly says, "The early Christian Church was saturated with spiritualism."

What, it may be asked, is the value to a woman of psychic experiences, whose reality may be convincing to herself, but never to others?

Firstly, there is this enormous value for me, that certain psychic experiences I have had make a future existence, after so-called death, a certainty.

Secondly, other varieties of psychic phenomena have furnished me with unmistakable proof that I possess an immortal soul.

Thirdly, still other varieties of experiences have provided me with the implicit belief in a God, who is in actual touch with Humanity.

Again, all soul experiences, begotten from out the supreme mystery of Being, show us that our real life is not contained in our present normal consciousness, but in a vastly wider, grander plane, which, as yet, is but dimly sensed by the few.

Those who have bathed in "the light invisible" can bring glory to those in gloom. They visit, but no longer live in the day. Their glory is in the night, when they walk with the Immortals, and bear with them the golden lamps of life eternal. Those who have realized the powers within, powers which not only are the pillars of infinite harmony, but the

mainspring of eternal life, have builded on a rock which no tempest can destroy.

"'Tis time
New hopes should animate the world,
New light should dawn from new revealings to a race
Weighed down so long."

PARACELSUS.



Living Vampires

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Vampires and Vampirism*, by Dudley Wright

There is, however, the living vampire, distinct and separate from the dead species. In Epirus and Thessaly there is a belief in living vampires, who leave their shepherd dwellings by night and roam about, biting and tearing men and animals and sucking their blood. In Moldavia and in Wallachia, the _murony_ are real, living men who become dogs at night, with the backbone prolonged to form a sort of tail. They roam through the villages, and their main delight is to kill cattle.

In some countries the belief prevails that the soul of a living man, often of a sorcerer, leaves its proper body asleep and goes forth, perhaps in visible form of a straw or fluff of down, slips through the keyholes, and attacks its sleeping victim. If the sleeper should wake in time to clutch this tiny soul-embodiment, he may through it have his revenge by maltreating or destroying its bodily owner.

The following account was contributed by me to the _Occult Review_ for July 1910. The particulars are given exactly as I wrote them down in shorthand from the narrator's dictation. My informant is a well-known medical practitioner in the West End of London, who has held various official appointments in the tropics, and I received his assurance that the incidents recorded happened exactly as they are described. Whether the Indian referred to is still alive or not is unknown, but certainly the two other principals, at the time of writing, are.

Some years ago a small number of English officials were stationed in a small place in the tropics. Their residences were about a quarter of a mile from each other, three of the bungalows standing in their own compounds and on separate elevations. Suddenly one of the officials fell ill, but the district medical officer was quite unable to trace the cause

of the illness. The official in question made several applications to the Colonial Office for transfer to another station, saying he felt he should die if he remained there. At first the application was refused, but the man got worse and fell into a very depressed mental condition. He eventually wrote again, saying that if his application for transfer could not be granted he would be compelled to throw up his appointment—a serious matter for him, as he had no private means. The application was then granted; he was transferred, and he recovered his health.

About eighteen months later another official had a slight attack of fever, from which he fully recovered; but after this attack he began to complain of lassitude until he went beyond a certain distance from his residence. The moment he returned to within this distance he said he felt as though a wet blanket had been thrown over him, and nothing could rouse him from the depression which seized him. He, too, fell into a low state of health, and on his request was transferred to another station.

Shortly after this transfer the wife of the district medical officer, living within the same area, began to fail in health and became terribly depressed, apparently from no cause whatever. Previously she had been a cheerful, happy woman, indulging in games and outdoor sports of all kinds, but now she became most depressed and miserable. At last, one night, about twelve o'clock, she woke up shrieking. Her husband rushed into her room, and she said she had woken up with a most awful feeling of depression, and had seen a creature travelling along the cornice of the room. She could only describe it as having a resemblance to something between a gigantic spider and a huge jelly-fish. Her husband ascribed it to an attack of nightmare, but he was disturbed in the same manner on the following night, when his wife said she had been awake for a quarter of an hour, but had not had the strength to call him before. He found her in a state of collapse, pulse exceedingly low, temperature three degrees below normal, pallid, and in a cold sweat. He mixed her a draught which had the effect of sending her to sleep.

In the morning she said she must leave the station and go home, as to stop there would mean her death. Thinking to divert her attention, her husband took her away on a pleasure trip, when he was glad to see that she entirely recovered her former cheerful expression and high spirits. This state of things lasted until, returning home in a rickshaw alongside her husband's, her face changed and she resumed her gloomy countenance.

"There," she said, "is it not awful? I have been so well and happy all the week, and now I feel as though a pall had been thrown over me."

Matters got worse, and she became more depressed than ever, and only a few nights passed before her husband was again called to her bedside about midnight. He found his wife in a state of considerable weakness, although it was not so acute as on the previous occasion. She said to him: "I want you to examine the back of my neck and shoulders very

carefully and see if there is any mark on the skin of any kind whatever.”

Her husband did so, but could not find a mark.

“Get a glass and look again. See if you can find any puncture from a sharp-pointed tooth.”

He made a microscopical examination, but found absolutely nothing.

“Now,” said his wife, “I can tell you what is the matter. I dreamed that I was in a house where I lived when I was a girl. My little boy called out to me. I ran down to him, but when I reached the bottom of the stairs a tall, black man came towards me. I waved him off, but I could not move to get away from him, though I pushed the boy out of his reach. The man came towards me, seized me in his arms, sat down at the bottom of the stairs, put me on his knee, and proceeded to suck from a point at the upper part of the spine, just below the neck. I felt that he was drawing all the blood and life out of me. Then he threw me from him, and apparently I lost consciousness as he did so. I felt as though I was dying. Then I woke up, and I had been lying here for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes before I was able to call you.”

“Have you ever experienced anything of this character before?” asked her husband.

“No, I have not; but night after night for many months I have woken up in exactly the same state, and that has been the sole cause of my mental depression. I have not said anything about it because it seemed so foolish, but now I have had this definite dream I cannot hold my tongue any longer.”

She soon passed into a peaceful sleep, and on discussing the matter the following morning with her husband she said: “I have a feeling somehow that it will not happen again. I feel quite well and strong, and all my depression is gone.”

In the afternoon husband and wife were going together to the club, when around the corner of the jungle came a tall Indian, the owner of a large number of milch cattle, and reputed to be a wealthy man. The surgeon’s wife suddenly stopped, turned pale, and said immediately: “That is the man I saw in my dream.”

The husband went directly up to the man and said to him: “Look here, I will give you twelve hours to get out of this place. I know everything that happened last night at midnight, and I will kill you like a dog if I find you here in twelve hours’ time.”

The Indian disappeared the same night, taking with him only a few valuables and a little loose money. He left behind him the money that

was deposited in the bank, as well as the whole of his property. His forty head of cattle, worth eighty dollars each, were impounded, and no news had been heard of him five years afterwards. Since his departure no one has complained of depression and lassitude in that area.



The Boat of Phantom Children

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Myths & Legends of our New Possessions & Protectorate*, by Charles M. Skinner

Sir Francis Drake, destroyer of many of the "invincible" ships of Spain, came to America with Sir John Hawkins, to subdue the Spanish colonies with the heaviest fleet he ever commanded. Though wrangles between the commanders made this expedition a comparative failure, still wherever the head of a don was seen, a cracking blow was struck at it. War was a crueller business then than it is to-day, in spite of our high explosives, our armored ships, our mighty guns, and our nimble tactics, and things were done that no captain would dare in these times; at least, no captain with a fear of the world's rebuke, or that of his own conscience. Just before Christmas, 1594, Drake was scourging the coast of Colombia, burning houses, and shipping and despoiling the towns. The people of one village near Rio de la Hache, having been warned of his coming, buried their little property, closed their houses, put fifty of their children on a fishing smack, while they hurriedly provisioned some boats to carry all the people to a distant cape, where they would remain in hiding until after Drake had destroyed their homes and passed on. The fisherman who owned the smack set sail too soon; he was separated from the others in a gale, and Drake, who then appeared, ran between him and the shore, and with a couple of shots drove him farther into the wild sea. The smack never returned. After the English had passed, the people watched for it, and, truly, on the next day, a boat was seen beating against the gale and trying to make the pier. As it came nearer, the parents saw their children holding out their arms and laughing. Then the outlines of the hull and sail grew dim, the children's forms drooped as if weary; and in another moment the vision had passed. Long was the grief and loud were the curses on the English. When Drake learned that he had fired on a harmless fishing vessel and driven a company of little ones away from land to be sunk in a tempest, he was filled with compunction and misgiving. The same vision that the parents had seen crossed the path

of his own ships. Before every storm the boat of phantoms appeared, and when he sailed for Escudo and Porto Bello it followed him. Wearied with many wars, ill with tropical fever, repentant for this useless killing, he sank into a depression from which nothing could rouse him, and in January he died on his ship, at Nombre de Dios. His remains were consigned to a sailor's grave--the wide ocean--and as the ship moved on her way, the crew, looking back to the place where the body had gone down, saw the phantom smack rise from the deep, rush like a wind-blown wrack across the spot, and melt into the air as it neared the shore.

Obeah Witches

ibid

From the earliest days of Spanish occupancy the Antilles have been the haunt of strange creatures. Mermen have sung in their waters, witches and wizards have perplexed their villages, spirits and fiends have dwelt among their woods. Everybody fears the jumbie, or evil spirit that walks the night; and the duppy, the rolling calf, the ghost of the murdered one; all pray that they may never meet the diablesse, the beautiful negress with glittering eyes, who passes silently through fields where people are at work, and smiling on any one of them compels him to follow her,--where? He never returns. Anansi (grotesquely disguised sometimes as Aunt Nancy) is a hairy old man with claws, who outwits the lesser creatures, as Br'er Rabbit does. To him and his familiars are attributed all manner of queer tales, one of which, from Jamaica, may be quoted as an illustration:

Sarah Winyan, an orphan of ten, lived with her aunt, while her two brothers kept house by themselves a mile or two away. This aunt was an Obeah witch, the duppy, or devil ghost, that was her familiar, appearing as a great black dog that she called Tiger. Sarah stood between this old woman and a little property, and after finding that the child endured her abuse with more or less equanimity and was not likely to die, she told her that she was too poor to support her any longer, and she must go. Sarah sat on a stone before the house, wondering how she could make a living, and all the time sang mournfully. A racket as of some heavy creature plunging about in the bushes aroused her with a start and she scrambled into a tree. It was Tiger who had been making the disturbance. He told her to descend at once. If she would go with him peacefully, and would be his servant, all would be well, but if she refused he would gnaw the tree down and tear her into a thousand pieces. He showed his double row of teeth, like daggers, whereupon Sarah immediately descended. As she walked beside him to his lair she sang low, in the hope of being heard

and rescued. It was well that she did so, for her brothers, who were hunting in the wood, recognized her voice and softly followed. Peering in at the cave where Tiger made his home, they saw him sleeping soundly with his head in Sarah's lap. Cautiously, slowly, she drew away, leaving a block of wood for his head to rest upon, and crept out of the cavern. Then the boys entered, and with their guns blew the head of the beast into bits, cut his body into four parts, buried them at the north, south, east and west edges of the wood; then killed the wicked aunt. And since that day dogs have been subject to men.

The evil eye is not uncommon in the Antilles. It blights the lives of children, and it is one of the worst of fates to be "overlooked" by an Obeah man possessing it. Higes, or witches, too, are seen, who take off their skins, and in that state of extra-nudity go about looking for children, whose blood they suck, like vampires. Lockjaw is caused by this loss of blood. There is a three-footed horse, also, that gallops about the country roads when it has come freshly out of hell and is looking for victims it can eat. If it halts before a house, that stop means death to somebody within, and the peculiar sound made by its three hoofs tells what has passed. It is not well to look, because the creature has an eye in the centre of its forehead that flashes fire. One who meets it is so fascinated by this blazing eye that he cannot look away. He stares and stares; presently paralysis creeps over him, and in a little while he falls dead. Sometimes a creature is seen riding on this horse,--a man with a blue face, like that of a corpse, and with that face turned toward the tail. Related, in tradition, to the horse was the king-snake of Carib myth, a frightful creature that wore a brilliant stone in its head, which it usually concealed with a lid, like that of the eye, but which it would uncover when it went to a river to drink, or played about the hills. Whoever looked on this dazzling stone would lose his sight on the instant.

The Obeah man has an hereditary power that comes to him in advanced age, and that, when at its strongest, enables him to send an evil spirit into any object he pleases. Not only do the people believe in him, but he has the fullest faith in himself. When he boils a witch broth of scorpions' blood, toads' heads, snake bellies, spider poison, and certain herbs picked by moonlight (an actual mixture used by Obeah witches),--boils it over a fire of dead men's bones, between midnight and dawn,--he has no more doubt of its power to harm than the physician doubts the power of his quinine and antipyrin for good.

A Cuban planter who suspected one of his older slaves of being an Obeah man determined to punish him if he were found guilty, and to suppress the diabolism attending the midnight meetings. Watching his chance, he followed his slaves into the wood, peeped through the crevices of the deserted hut which they had entered to perform their fantastic rites, saw their mad dance, when, stripped and decorated with beads, shells, and feathers, they leaped about with torches in their hands;

then saw his suspected slave enter through a back door, his black skin painted to represent a skeleton. The old man held up a fat toad, which, he said, was his familiar, and the company began to worship it with grotesque and obscene ceremonies. Though he felt a thrill of disgust and even a dim sense of fear at the spectacle, the planter broke in at the door and confronted the Obeah man. Had he ordered the old fellow to do any given task about his house or grounds in the daytime, that order would have been obeyed. What was the planter's astonishment, therefore, when the slave calmly disregarded his command to return to quarters, and bade his master leave the place at once and cease to disturb the meeting, or prepare for a great misfortune. Enraged, and fearing lest this defiance might encourage the other slaves to mutiny, the master shot the old man dead. A few days later the planter's wife died while seated at the table. A week after his daughter died, a seeming victim of poison. All the latent superstition in his nature having been aroused, he sought out another Obeah man, to beg that he would intercede with the powers of darkness, but the wizard was stern. He told him that the slave he had killed was the most powerful master of spirits in the country, and that nothing could stay the revenges of fate. When the planter reached his home he found a letter there announcing the death of his only son in Paris.

The Matanzas Obeah Woman

ibid

On a hillock near Matanzas, with a ragged wood behind it, stood for many years an unkempt cottage. In our land we should hardly dignify it by such a name. We would call it, rather, a hovel. Some rotting timbers of it may still be left, for the black people who live thereabout keep away, especially at night, believing that the hillock is a resort of spirits. Yet not many of them remember the incident that put this unpleasant fame upon it, for--that was back in the slavery days. The brutal O'Donnell was governor-general then. He found Cuba in its usual state of sullen tranquillity, and no chance seemed to offer by which he could make a name for himself, so he magnified every village wrangle into an insurrection. It looked well in his reports when he set forth the skill and ease with which he had suppressed the uprisings, and, as he did not scruple to take life in punishment for slight offences, nor to retaliate on a community for the misconduct of a single member of it, he almost created the revolution that he described to his home government. The merest murmur, the merest shadow was enough to take him to the scene of an alleged outbreak, and he would cause slaves to be whipped until they were ready to confess anything.

A black boy in Matanzas, arrested on suspicion of inciting to rebellion, was condemned to seven hundred blows with the lash. At the end of the flogging, being still alive, he was shot, at O'Donnell's order. He would confess nothing, because he had nothing to confess. This boy had been brought up in a well-to-do Spanish family, and was the play-mate, the friend, of the son of that family, rather than his slave. The white boy begged for the life of his associate, the family implored mercy, and asked for at least a trial, but the governor-general would not listen to them, and after the shooting the white boy became insane with shock and grief. Thus much of the legend is declared to be fact.

It was the mother of the black boy who lived in this cabin outside of the town. She had also been a slave until the Spanish family, giving up its plantation, moved into the city, sold the younger and stronger of their human properties, and set free the elderly and rheumatic, taking with them only a couple of servants and the boy, who went with his mother's consent, for she knew he would be cared for, and she could see him often, the relation between slave and owner, being more commonly affectionate than otherwise. At its best, slavery is morally benumbing to the enslaved, destructive of the finer feelings, and when the old woman learned of her son's death,--and such a death--she did not go mad, as his playfellow had done. She lamented loudly, she said many prayers, she accepted condolences with seeming gratitude, but the tears had ceased to flow ere many weeks, and she was seen to smile when her old mistress, whose affliction was indeed the heavier, had called on her in her cabin, no doubt feeling as much in need of her servant's sympathy as the servant felt of the creature comforts she took to her.

Yet deep in Maumee Niña's nature a change had taken place. She did not know it herself for many months. Her loss had not affected her conduct or appearance greatly, yet her heart had hardened under it and she began to look upon the world with a different eye. She cared less for her friends, and went to church less often,--a suspicious circumstance, for when a negro failed to go to mass, and kept away from confession, it was surely because he had something mischievous to confess. The rumor got about that Maumee Niña had become an Obeah woman,--a voodoo worker, a witch. It is not unlikely that the accusation inspired her to live down to it. Not only were witches held in respect and fear, but she might be able, through evil arts, to plague the race that had worked her husband to death in the mines, and now had killed her only son. She kept still more at home, brooding, planning, yielding farther and farther to the evil suggestions that her repute as a voodoo priestess offered to her, yet keeping one place in her heart even warmer than before,--the place filled by her daughter, Juanita.

This girl of fifteen or sixteen was not black, like her mother. She was a handsome mulatto. In a country where relations are so easily

established without marriage, and where marriage is so difficult and has so little force, the fatherhood of many children is in doubt. If Juanita knew her father's name she was not known to him. It mattered little. The old woman intended to bring her up as a lady,--that is, to qualify her for a place as waiting-maid in the house of some good family; so she made many sacrifices on her account, clothing her vividly, requiring less work of her than she should have done, and even, it was said, paying money to have reading taught to her, and that was an accomplishment, indeed.

Considering the pains and self-denials that the rearing of this child incurred, it was a trifle inconsistent that Maumee Niña should have opposed the friendly advances of gallants from the town. She was not of a class that is wont to consider the etiquette of such attentions, nor would she have refused to give her daughter in marriage to any Cuban. It was that her feeling toward the Spaniards was deepening into hate, and it rejoiced her to learn that a revolution was really intended. By her native shrewdness she was able to do something for her people's cause. Whenever a young negro went to her to have his fortune told,--and from this art she began to realize a steady income,--she managed to hint at his future greatness as a military leader, his gains in the loot of Spanish camps, his prowess in bush-fighting when hostilities should really have begun.

In this way she really incited a number of the ambitious, the quarrelsome, and the greedy to enlist in the schemes for Cuba's liberation. Nañigo meetings were held in and near her house; there were wild dances and uncanny ceremonies, sacrificing of animals in the moonlight, baptisms of blood, weird chants and responses, and crime increased in the town. All this being reported to the military the guard lines were extended and a squadron was posted at a house not over a mile from Maumee Niña's, with Lieutenant Fernandez in command. Fernandez was a dashing fellow, with swarthy countenance, moustachios that bristled upward, close-trimmed hair and beard, a laughing, pleasure-loving eye, and he wore a trig uniform that set off his compact shape to advantage. Old Niña heard, though it was not true, probably, that he had carried out the order of O'Donnell for the shooting of her boy. Naturally he was the last man she could wish to see, and she made no secret of her dislike when, on returning to her home from a visit to Matanzas, she found this young officer seated on a chair before her door, twirling his moustache and gayly chatting with her daughter. She instantly ordered the girl to go indoors, and bade the lieutenant pack off about his business. Being an easy-going fellow, with no dislike for the people among whom the fortunes of his calling had cast him, and with a strong fondness for pretty maids, the young man deprecated the anger of the woman, but finding, after some persiflage, that it was of small use to try to make friends with her, he marched away toward his quarters, trolling a lively air and drumming with his fingers on his sword-hilt. On the next evening he

was at Maumee Niña's again, and before the very nose of that indignant dame chaffed her daughter, whom he also chucked under the chin; and he gazed long and searchingly at a couple of low-browed, shifty-looking blacks who were talking with the old woman when he entered.

"Who are these fellows?" he demanded.

"What right have you, señor lieutenant, to question me about my guests, in my own house?" replied Niña. "It is enough that they were invited, and you were not."

The lieutenant glanced sharply at Juanita. She looked at the shabby fellows for an instant, smiled contemptuously, and gave her head a saucy fling. The officer's good-nature was restored in a moment. "Give me a calabash of water from that spring of yours, your grace, and I'll take myself off," said he. "But, mind, there are to be no more dances here,--no more voodoo practice."

Old Niña left the room grumbling to herself, while Fernandez talked with Juanita, quite disregarding the sour and silent pair of black men. As he glanced through a crack in the timbers of the house he saw the old woman raise a gourd of water, wave her hand above it three times, mutter, and shake her head. Then she drew from her pocket a tiny object and dropped it in the water, stirring it around and around, as if to dissolve it. There was a quiet smile on the lieutenant's face as he received the calabash from the old woman's hand.

"In the old days, señora," he said, "it was the way to sweeten the drink of a cavalier by getting the fairest lady of the house to sip from it before he drank. Señora Juanita, you will take a little from this shell, and I will then drink to your eyes."

Juanita had taken the calabash and had lifted it to her mouth, when Niña sprang forward and struck it to the floor. The lieutenant looked steadily into the face of the old woman. Her eyes, at first expressing fear, then anger, dropped under his gaze. "I thought so," he said, calmly, and left the house without a backward look or another word.

Late that night a subaltern, who had called on Fernandez to carry a report to headquarters, set off alone in the direction of the city. When half a mile on his way a man suddenly confronted him and asked him for a light. He promptly offered his cigar. Puffing fiercely the stranger created a glow, and in the shadow behind it he eagerly scanned the face of the soldier. He then returned the stump, saying, "Pass on, sir. You are not he I seek. Your cigar has saved your life." There was a click, as of a knife thrust into its sheath, and the stranger was gone.

Fernandez heard of this and drew an inference, but it did not deter

him from another visit to the Obeah woman's house next evening. The old woman was away. Juanita was there alone. Truly, the girl was fair, her eye was merry, she had white teeth and a tempting lip; moreover, she appeared by no means indifferent to the young officer. In ten minutes they were talking pleasantly, confidently, and Fernandez held the maiden's hand.

The hours went by without any one there to take account of them. It was a fair and quiet night, except for the queer and persistent call of some insects that seemed always to be drawing nearer to the house. Faint now came the sound of the clock in Matanzas striking twelve. As if it were a signal to the dead, shadows appeared about the house of the Obeah woman, creeping, nodding, motioning, moving toward the door. One stood close beside it and struck it twice, loudly, with a metal implement that rang sharply; then it waited. Steps were heard inside,—the steps of a man in military boots: Fernandez. There was a swish of steel, too, like a sword whipped out of its scabbard, but almost at the instant when this was heard the door was opened. A blow, a faint cry, a fall, a hurry of steps in the grass; then a light. Fernandez held it. A long, agonized scream quavered through the darkness, and Maumee Niña, with blood on her hands, fell prone on the body of her daughter, her Juanita, lying there on the earth with a knife in her heart.



The Arrears Of Teind

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The Book of Dreams and Ghosts*, by Andrew Lang

"Mr. Rutherford, of Bowland, a gentleman of landed property in the Vale of Gala, was prosecuted for a very considerable sum, the accumulated arrears of teind (or tithe) for which he was said to be indebted to a noble family, the titulars (lay impropiators of the tithes). Mr. Rutherford was strongly impressed with the belief that his father had, by a form of process peculiar to the law of Scotland, purchased these teinds from the titular, and, therefore, that the present prosecution was groundless. But, after an industrious search among his father's papers, an investigation among the public records and a careful inquiry among all persons who had transacted law business for his father, no evidence could be recovered to support his defence. The period was now near at hand, when he conceived the loss of his law-suit to be inevitable; and he had formed the determination to ride to Edinburgh next day and make the best bargain he could in

the way of compromise. He went to bed with this resolution, and, with all the circumstances of the case floating upon his mind, had a dream to the following purpose. His father, who had been many years dead, appeared to him, he thought, and asked him why he was disturbed in his mind. In dreams men are not surprised at such apparitions. Mr. Rutherford thought that he informed his father of the cause of his distress, adding that the payment of a considerable sum of money was the more unpleasant to him because he had a strong consciousness that it was not due, though he was unable to recover any evidence in support of his belief. 'You are right, my son,' replied the paternal shade. 'I did acquire right to these teinds for payment of which you are now prosecuted. The papers relating to the transaction are in the hands of Mr. ---, a writer (or attorney), who is now retired from professional business and resides at Inveresk, near Edinburgh. He was a person whom I employed on that occasion for a particular reason, but who never on any other occasion transacted business on my account. It is very possible,' pursued the vision, 'that Mr. --- may have forgotten a matter which is now of a very old date; but you may call it to his recollection by this token, that when I came to pay his account there was difficulty in getting change for a Portugal piece of gold and we were forced to drink out the balance at a tavern.'

"Mr. Rutherford awoke in the morning with all the words of the vision imprinted on his mind, and thought it worth while to walk across the country to Inveresk instead of going straight to Edinburgh. When he came there he waited on the gentleman mentioned in the dream--a very old man. Without saying anything of the vision he inquired whether he ever remembered having conducted such a matter for his deceased father. The old gentleman could not at first bring the circumstance to his recollection, but on mention of the Portugal piece of gold the whole returned upon his memory. He made an immediate search for the papers and recovered them, so that Mr. Rutherford carried to Edinburgh the documents necessary to gain the cause which he was on the verge of losing."

The story is reproduced because it is clearly one of the tales which come round in cycles, either because events repeat themselves or because people will unconsciously localise old legends in new places and assign old occurrences or fables to new persons. Thus every one has heard how Lord Westbury called a certain man in the Herald's office "a foolish old fellow who did not even know his own foolish old business". Lord Westbury may very well have said this, but long before his time the remark was attributed to the famous Lord Chesterfield. Lord Westbury may have quoted it from Chesterfield or hit on it by accident, or the old story may have been assigned to him. In the same way Mr. Rutherford may have had his dream or the following tale of St. Augustine's (also cited by Scott) may have been attributed to him, with the picturesque addition about the piece of Portuguese gold. Except for the piece of Portuguese gold St. Augustine

practically tells the anecdote in his *De Cura pro Mortuis Habenda*, adding the acute reflection which follows. {16}

"Of a surety, when we were at Milan, we heard tell of a certain person of whom was demanded payment of a debt, with production of his deceased father's acknowledgment, which debt, unknown to the son, the father had paid, whereupon the man began to be very sorrowful, and to marvel that his father while dying did not tell him what he owed when he also made his will. Then in this exceeding anxiousness of his, his said father appeared to him in a dream, and made known to him where was the counter acknowledgment by which that acknowledgment was cancelled. Which when the young man had found and showed, he not only rebutted the wrongful claim of a false debt, but also got back his father's note of hand, which the father had not got back when the money was paid.

"Here then the soul of a man is supposed to have had care for his son, and to have come to him in his sleep, that, teaching him what he did not know, he might relieve him of a great trouble. But about the very same time as we heard this, it chanced at Carthage that the rhetorician Eulogius, who had been my disciple in that art, being (as he himself, after our return to Africa, told us the story) in course of lecturing to his disciples on Cicero's rhetorical books, as he looked over the portion of reading which he was to deliver on the following day, fell upon a certain passage, and not being able to understand it, was scarce able to sleep for the trouble of his mind: in which night, as he dreamed, I expounded to him that which he did not understand; nay, not I, but my likeness, while I was unconscious of the thing and far away beyond sea, it might be doing, or it might be dreaming, some other thing, and not in the least caring for his cares. In what way these things come about I know not; but in what way soever they come, why do we not believe it comes in the same way for a person in a dream to see a dead man, as it comes that he sees a living man? both, no doubt, neither knowing nor caring who dreams of their images, or where or when.

"Like dreams, moreover, are some visions of persons awake, who have had their senses troubled, such as phrenetic persons, or those who are mad in any way, for they, too, talk to themselves just as though they were speaking to people verily present, and as well with absent men as with present, whose images they perceive whether persons living or dead. But just as they who live are unconscious that they are seen of them and talk with them (for indeed they are not really themselves present, or themselves make speeches, but through troubled senses these persons are wrought upon by such like imaginary visions), just so they also who have departed this life, to persons thus affected appear as present while they be absent, and are themselves utterly unconscious whether any man sees them in regard of their image." {18}

St. Augustine adds a similar story of a trance.

The Vision And The Portrait

ibid

Mrs. M. writes (December 15, 1891) that before her vision she had heard nothing about hauntings in the house occupied by herself and her husband, and nothing about the family sorrows of her predecessors there.

"One night, on retiring to my bedroom about 11 o'clock, I thought I heard a peculiar moaning sound, and some one sobbing as if in great distress of mind. I listened very attentively, and still it continued; so I raised the gas in my bedroom, and then went to the window on the landing, drew the blind aside, and there on the grass was a very beautiful young girl in a kneeling posture, before a soldier in a general's uniform, sobbing and clasping her hands together, entreating for pardon, but alas! he only waved her away from him. So much did I feel for the girl that I ran down the staircase to the door opening upon the lawn, and begged her to come in and tell me her sorrow. The figures then disappeared gradually, as in a dissolving view. Not in the least nervous did I feel then; went again to my bedroom, took a sheet of writing-paper, and wrote down what I had seen." {77}

Mrs. M., whose husband was absent, began to feel nervous, and went to another lady's room.

She later heard of an old disgrace to the youngest daughter of the proud family, her predecessors in the house. The poor girl tried in vain to win forgiveness, especially from a near relative, a soldier, Sir X. Y.

"So vivid was my remembrance of the features of the soldier, that some months after the occurrence [of the vision] when I called with my husband at a house where there was a portrait of him, I stepped before it and said, 'Why, look! there is the General!' And sure enough it _was_."

Mrs. M. had not heard that the portrait was in the room where she saw it. Mr. M. writes that he took her to the house where he knew it to be without telling her of its existence. Mrs. M. turned pale when she saw it. Mr. M. knew the sad old story, but had kept it to himself. The family in which the disgrace occurred, in 1847 or 1848, were his relations. {78}

This vision was a veracious hallucination; it gave intelligence not otherwise known to Mrs. M., and capable of confirmation, therefore the appearances would be called "ghosts". The majority of people do not believe in the truth of any such stories of veracious hallucinations, just as they do not believe in veracious dreams. Mr. Galton, out of all his packets of reports of hallucinations, does not even allude to a veracious example, whether he has records of such a thing or not. Such reports, however, are ghost stories, "which we now proceed," or continue, "to narrate". The reader will do well to remember that while everything ghostly, and not to be explained by known physical facts, is in the view of science a hallucination, every hallucination is not a ghost for the purposes of story-telling. The hallucination must, for story-telling purposes, be _veracious_.

Following our usual method, we naturally begin with the anecdotes least trying to the judicial faculties, and most capable of an ordinary explanation. Perhaps of all the senses, the sense of touch, though in some ways the surest, is in others the most easily deceived. Some people who cannot call up a clear mental image of things seen, say a saltcellar, can readily call up a mental revival of the feeling of touching salt. Again, a slight accidental throb, or leap of a sinew or vein, may feel so like a touch that we turn round to see who touched us. These familiar facts go far to make the following tale more or less conceivable.

The Restraining Hand

ibid

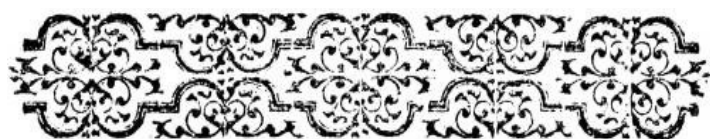
"About twenty years ago," writes Mrs. Elliot, "I received some letters by post, one of which contained 15 pounds in bank notes. After reading the letters I went into the kitchen with them in my hands. I was alone at the time. . . . Having done with the letters, I made an effort to throw them into the fire, when I distinctly felt my hand arrested in the act. It was as though another hand were gently laid upon my own, pressing it back. Much surprised, I looked at my hand and then saw it contained, not the letters I had intended to destroy, but the bank notes, and that the letters were in the other hand. I was so surprised that I called out, 'Who's here?'" {80a}

Nobody will call this "the touch of a vanished hand". Part of Mrs. Elliot's mind knew what she was about, and started an unreal but veracious feeling to warn her. We shall come to plenty of Hands not so readily disposed of.

Next to touch, the sense most apt to be deceived is hearing. Every one who has listened anxiously for an approaching carriage, has often heard it come before it came. In the summer of 1896 the writer, with

a lady and another companion, were standing on the veranda at the back of a house in Dumfriesshire, waiting for a cab to take one of them to the station. They heard a cab arrive and draw up, went round to the front of the house, saw the servant open the door and bring out the luggage, but wheeled vehicle there was none in sound or sight. Yet all four persons had heard it, probably by dint of expectation.

To hear articulate voices where there are none is extremely common in madness, {80b} but not very rare, as Mr. Galton shows, among the sane. When the voices are veracious, give unknown information, they are in the same case as truthful dreams.



The Wood Of The Dead

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Empty House And Other Ghost Stories*
by Algernon Blackwood

One summer, in my wanderings with a knapsack, I was at luncheon in the room of a wayside inn in the western country, when the door opened and there entered an old rustic, who crossed close to my end of the table and sat himself down very quietly in the seat by the bow window. We exchanged glances, or, properly speaking, nods, for at the moment I did not actually raise my eyes to his face, so concerned was I with the important business of satisfying an appetite gained by tramping twelve miles over a difficult country.

The fine warm rain of seven o'clock, which had since risen in a kind of luminous mist about the tree tops, now floated far overhead in a deep blue sky, and the day was settling down into a blaze of golden light. It was one of those days peculiar to Somerset and North Devon, when the orchards shine and the meadows seem to add a radiance of their own, so brilliantly soft are the colourings of grass and foliage.

The inn-keeper's daughter, a little maiden with a simple country loveliness, presently entered with a foaming pewter mug, enquired after my welfare, and went out again. Apparently she had not noticed the old man sitting in the settle by the bow window, nor had he, for his part, so much as once turned his head in our direction.

Under ordinary circumstances I should probably have given no thought to this other occupant of the room; but the fact that it was supposed to be reserved for my private use, and the singular thing that he sat looking

aimlessly out of the window, with no attempt to engage me in conversation, drew my eyes more than once somewhat curiously upon him, and I soon caught myself wondering why he sat there so silently, and always with averted head.

He was, I saw, a rather bent old man in rustic dress, and the skin of his face was wrinkled like that of an apple; corduroy trousers were caught up with a string below the knee, and he wore a sort of brown fustian jacket that was very much faded. His thin hand rested upon a stoutish stick. He wore no hat and carried none, and I noticed that his head, covered with silvery hair, was finely shaped and gave the impression of something noble.

Though rather piqued by his studied disregard of my presence, I came to the conclusion that he probably had something to do with the little hostel and had a perfect right to use this room with freedom, and I finished my luncheon without breaking the silence and then took the settle opposite to smoke a pipe before going on my way.

Through the open window came the scents of the blossoming fruit trees; the orchard was drenched in sunshine and the branches danced lazily in the breeze; the grass below fairly shone with white and yellow daisies, and the red roses climbing in profusion over the casement mingled their perfume with the sweetly penetrating odour of the sea.

It was a place to dawdle in, to lie and dream away a whole afternoon, watching the sleepy butterflies and listening to the chorus of birds which seemed to fill every corner of the sky. Indeed, I was already debating in my mind whether to linger and enjoy it all instead of taking the strenuous pathway over the hills, when the old rustic in the settle opposite suddenly turned his face towards me for the first time and began to speak.

His voice had a quiet dreamy note in it that was quite in harmony with the day and the scene, but it sounded far away, I thought, almost as though it came to me from outside where the shadows were weaving their eternal tissue of dreams upon the garden floor. Moreover, there was no trace in it of the rough quality one might naturally have expected, and, now that I saw the full face of the speaker for the first time, I noted with something like a start that the deep, gentle eyes seemed far more in keeping with the timbre of the voice than with the rough and very countrified appearance of the clothes and manner. His voice set pleasant waves of sound in motion towards me, and the actual words, if I remember rightly, were--

"You are a stranger in these parts?" or "Is not this part of the country strange to you?"

There was no "sir," nor any outward and visible sign of the deference

usually paid by real country folk to the town-bred visitor, but in its place a gentleness, almost a sweetness, of polite sympathy that was far more of a compliment than either.

I answered that I was wandering on foot through a part of the country that was wholly new to me, and that I was surprised not to find a place of such idyllic loveliness marked upon my map.

"I have lived here all my life," he said, with a sigh, "and am never tired of coming back to it again."

"Then you no longer live in the immediate neighbourhood?"

"I have moved," he answered briefly, adding after a pause in which his eyes seemed to wander wistfully to the wealth of blossoms beyond the window; "but I am almost sorry, for nowhere else have I found the sunshine lie so warmly, the flowers smell so sweetly, or the winds and streams make such tender music. . . ."

His voice died away into a thin stream of sound that lost itself in the rustle of the rose-leaves climbing in at the window, for he turned his head away from me as he spoke and looked out into the garden. But it was impossible to conceal my surprise, and I raised my eyes in frank astonishment on hearing so poetic an utterance from such a figure of a man, though at the same time realising that it was not in the least inappropriate, and that, in fact, no other sort of expression could have properly been expected from him.

"I am sure you are right," I answered at length, when it was clear he had ceased speaking; "or there is something of enchantment here--of real fairy-like enchantment--that makes me think of the visions of childhood days, before one knew anything of--of--"

I had been oddly drawn into his vein of speech, some inner force compelling me. But here the spell passed and I could not catch the thoughts that had a moment before opened a long vista before my inner vision.

"To tell you the truth," I concluded lamely, "the place fascinates me and I am in two minds about going further--"

Even at this stage I remember thinking it odd that I should be talking like this with a stranger whom I met in a country inn, for it has always been one of my failings that to strangers my manner is brief to surliness. It was as though we were figures meeting in a dream, speaking without sound, obeying laws not operative in the everyday working world, and about to play with a new scale of space and time perhaps. But my astonishment passed quickly into an entirely different feeling when I became aware that the old man opposite had turned his head from the

window again, and was regarding me with eyes so bright they seemed almost to shine with an inner flame. His gaze was fixed upon my face with an intense ardour, and his whole manner had suddenly become alert and concentrated. There was something about him I now felt for the first time that made little thrills of excitement run up and down my back. I met his look squarely, but with an inward tremor.

"Stay, then, a little while longer," he said in a much lower and deeper voice than before; "stay, and I will teach you something of the purpose of my coming."

He stopped abruptly. I was conscious of a decided shiver.

"You have a special purpose then--in coming back?" I asked, hardly knowing what I was saying.

"To call away someone," he went on in the same thrilling voice, "someone who is not quite ready to come, but who is needed elsewhere for a worthier purpose." There was a sadness in his manner that mystified me more than ever.

"You mean--?" I began, with an unaccountable access of trembling.

"I have come for someone who must soon move, even as I have moved."

He looked me through and through with a dreadfully piercing gaze, but I met his eyes with a full straight stare, trembling though I was, and I was aware that something stirred within me that had never stirred before, though for the life of me I could not have put a name to it, or have analysed its nature. Something lifted and rolled away. For one single second I understood clearly that the past and the future exist actually side by side in one immense Present; that it was I who moved to and fro among shifting, protean appearances.

The old man dropped his eyes from my face, and the momentary glimpse of a mightier universe passed utterly away. Reason regained its sway over a dull, limited kingdom.

"Come to-night," I heard the old man say, "come to me to-night into the Wood of the Dead. Come at midnight--"

Involuntarily I clutched the arm of the settle for support, for I then felt that I was speaking with someone who knew more of the real things that are and will be, than I could ever know while in the body, working through the ordinary channels of sense--and this curious half-promise of a partial lifting of the veil had its undeniable effect upon me.

The breeze from the sea had died away outside, and the blossoms were still. A yellow butterfly floated lazily past the window. The song of

the birds hushed--I smelt the sea--I smelt the perfume of heated summer air rising from fields and flowers, the ineffable scents of June and of the long days of the year--and with it, from countless green meadows beyond, came the hum of myriad summer life, children's voices, sweet pipings, and the sound of water falling.

I knew myself to be on the threshold of a new order of experience--of an ecstasy. Something drew me forth with a sense of inexpressible yearning towards the being of this strange old man in the window seat, and for a moment I knew what it was to taste a mighty and wonderful sensation, and to touch the highest pinnacle of joy I have ever known. It lasted for less than a second, and was gone; but in that brief instant of time the same terrible lucidity came to me that had already shown me how the past and future exist in the present, and I realised and understood that pleasure and pain are one and the same force, for the joy I had just experienced included also all the pain I ever had felt, or ever could feel. . . .

The sunshine grew to dazzling radiance, faded, passed away. The shadows paused in their dance upon the grass, deepened a moment, and then melted into air. The flowers of the fruit trees laughed with their little silvery laughter as the wind sighed over their radiant eyes the old, old tale of its personal love. Once or twice a voice called my name. A wonderful sensation of lightness and power began to steal over me.

Suddenly the door opened and the inn-keeper's daughter came in. By all ordinary standards, her's was a charming country loveliness, born of the stars and wild-flowers, of moonlight shining through autumn mists upon the river and the fields; yet, by contrast with the higher order of beauty I had just momentarily been in touch with, she seemed almost ugly. How dull her eyes, how thin her voice, how vapid her smile, and insipid her whole presentment.

For a moment she stood between me and the occupant of the window seat while I counted out the small change for my meal and for her services; but when, an instant later, she moved aside, I saw that the settle was empty and that there was no longer anyone in the room but our two selves.

This discovery was no shock to me; indeed, I had almost expected it, and the man had gone just as a figure goes out of a dream, causing no surprise and leaving me as part and parcel of the same dream without breaking of continuity. But, as soon as I had paid my bill and thus resumed in very practical fashion the thread of my normal consciousness, I turned to the girl and asked her if she knew the old man who had been sitting in the window seat, and what he had meant by the Wood of the Dead.

The maiden started visibly, glancing quickly round the empty room, but

answering simply that she had seen no one. I described him in great detail, and then, as the description grew clearer, she turned a little pale under her pretty sunburn and said very gravely that it must have been the ghost.

"Ghost! What ghost?"

"Oh, the village ghost," she said quietly, coming closer to my chair with a little nervous movement of genuine alarm, and adding in a lower voice, "He comes before a death, they say!"

It was not difficult to induce the girl to talk, and the story she told me, shorn of the superstition that had obviously gathered with the years round the memory of a strangely picturesque figure, was an interesting and peculiar one.

The inn, she said, was originally a farmhouse, occupied by a yeoman farmer, evidently of a superior, if rather eccentric, character, who had been very poor until he reached old age, when a son died suddenly in the Colonies and left him an unexpected amount of money, almost a fortune.

The old man thereupon altered no whit his simple manner of living, but devoted his income entirely to the improvement of the village and to the assistance of its inhabitants; he did this quite regardless of his personal likes and dislikes, as if one and all were absolutely alike to him, objects of a genuine and impersonal benevolence. People had always been a little afraid of the man, not understanding his eccentricities, but the simple force of this love for humanity changed all that in a very short space of time; and before he died he came to be known as the Father of the Village and was held in great love and veneration by all.

A short time before his end, however, he began to act queerly. He spent his money just as usefully and wisely, but the shock of sudden wealth after a life of poverty, people said, had unsettled his mind. He claimed to see things that others did not see, to hear voices, and to have visions. Evidently, he was not of the harmless, foolish, visionary order, but a man of character and of great personal force, for the people became divided in their opinions, and the vicar, good man, regarded and treated him as a "special case." For many, his name and atmosphere became charged almost with a spiritual influence that was not of the best. People quoted texts about him; kept when possible out of his way, and avoided his house after dark. None understood him, but though the majority loved him, an element of dread and mystery became associated with his name, chiefly owing to the ignorant gossip of the few.

A grove of pine trees behind the farm--the girl pointed them out to me on the slope of the hill--he said was the Wood of the Dead, because just

before anyone died in the village he saw them walk into that wood, singing. None who went in ever came out again. He often mentioned the names to his wife, who usually published them to all the inhabitants within an hour of her husband's confidence; and it was found that the people he had seen enter the wood--died. On warm summer nights he would sometimes take an old stick and wander out, hatless, under the pines, for he loved this wood, and used to say he met all his old friends there, and would one day walk in there never to return. His wife tried to break him gently off this habit, but he always had his own way; and once, when she followed and found him standing under a great pine in the thickest portion of the grove, talking earnestly to someone she could not see, he turned and rebuked her very gently, but in such a way that she never repeated the experiment, saying--

"You should never interrupt me, Mary, when I am talking with the others; for they teach me, remember, wonderful things, and I must learn all I can before I go to join them."

This story went like wild-fire through the village, increasing with every repetition, until at length everyone was able to give an accurate description of the great veiled figures the woman declared she had seen moving among the trees where her husband stood. The innocent pine-grove now became positively haunted, and the title of "Wood of the Dead" clung naturally as if it had been applied to it in the ordinary course of events by the compilers of the Ordnance Survey.

On the evening of his ninetieth birthday the old man went up to his wife and kissed her. His manner was loving, and very gentle, and there was something about him besides, she declared afterwards, that made her slightly in awe of him and feel that he was almost more of a spirit than a man.

He kissed her tenderly on both cheeks, but his eyes seemed to look right through her as he spoke.

"Dearest wife," he said, "I am saying good-bye to you, for I am now going into the Wood of the Dead, and I shall not return. Do not follow me, or send to search, but be ready soon to come upon the same journey yourself."

The good woman burst into tears and tried to hold him, but he easily slipped from her hands, and she was afraid to follow him. Slowly she saw him cross the field in the sunshine, and then enter the cool shadows of the grove, where he disappeared from her sight.

That same night, much later, she woke to find him lying peacefully by her side in bed, with one arm stretched out towards her, _dead_. Her story was half believed, half doubted at the time, but in a very few years afterwards it evidently came to be accepted by all the

countryside. A funeral service was held to which the people flocked in great numbers, and everyone approved of the sentiment which led the widow to add the words, "The Father of the Village," after the usual texts which appeared upon the stone over his grave.

This, then, was the story I pieced together of the village ghost as the little inn-keeper's daughter told it to me that afternoon in the parlour of the inn.

"But you're not the first to say you've seen him," the girl concluded; "and your description is just what we've always heard, and that window, they say, was just where he used to sit and think, and think, when he was alive, and sometimes, they say, to cry for hours together."

"And would you feel afraid if you had seen him?" I asked, for the girl seemed strangely moved and interested in the whole story.

"I think so," she answered timidly. "Surely, if he spoke to me. He did speak to _you_, didn't he, sir?" she asked after a slight pause.

"He said he had come for someone."

"Come for someone," she repeated. "Did he say--" she went on falteringly.

"No, he did not say for whom," I said quickly, noticing the sudden shadow on her face and the tremulous voice.

"Are you really sure, sir?"

"Oh, quite sure," I answered cheerfully. "I did not even ask him." The girl looked at me steadily for nearly a whole minute as though there were many things she wished to tell me or to ask. But she said nothing, and presently picked up her tray from the table and walked slowly out of the room.

Instead of keeping to my original purpose and pushing on to the next village over the hills, I ordered a room to be prepared for me at the inn, and that afternoon I spent wandering about the fields and lying under the fruit trees, watching the white clouds sailing out over the sea. The Wood of the Dead I surveyed from a distance, but in the village I visited the stone erected to the memory of the "Father of the Village"--who was thus, evidently, no mythical personage--and saw also the monuments of his fine unselfish spirit: the schoolhouse he built, the library, the home for the aged poor, and the tiny hospital.

That night, as the clock in the church tower was striking half-past eleven, I stealthily left the inn and crept through the dark orchard and over the hayfield in the direction of the hill whose southern slope was

clothed with the Wood of the Dead. A genuine interest impelled me to the adventure, but I also was obliged to confess to a certain sinking in my heart as I stumbled along over the field in the darkness, for I was approaching what might prove to be the birth-place of a real country myth, and a spot already lifted by the imaginative thoughts of a considerable number of people into the region of the haunted and ill-omened.

The inn lay below me, and all round it the village clustered in a soft black shadow unrelieved by a single light. The night was moonless, yet distinctly luminous, for the stars crowded the sky. The silence of deep slumber was everywhere; so still, indeed, that every time my foot kicked against a stone I thought the sound must be heard below in the village and waken the sleepers.

I climbed the hill slowly, thinking chiefly of the strange story of the noble old man who had seized the opportunity to do good to his fellows the moment it came his way, and wondering why the causes that operate ceaselessly behind human life did not always select such admirable instruments. Once or twice a night-bird circled swiftly over my head, but the bats had long since gone to rest, and there was no other sign of life stirring.

Then, suddenly, with a singular thrill of emotion, I saw the first trees of the Wood of the Dead rise in front of me in a high black wall. Their crests stood up like giant spears against the starry sky; and though there was no perceptible movement of the air on my cheek I heard a faint, rushing sound among their branches as the night breeze passed to and fro over their countless little needles. A remote, hushed murmur rose overhead and died away again almost immediately; for in these trees the wind seems to be never absolutely at rest, and on the calmest day there is always a sort of whispering music among their branches.

For a moment I hesitated on the edge of this dark wood, and listened intently. Delicate perfumes of earth and bark stole out to meet me. Impenetrable darkness faced me. Only the consciousness that I was obeying an order, strangely given, and including a mighty privilege, enabled me to find the courage to go forward and step in boldly under the trees.

Instantly the shadows closed in upon me and "something" came forward to meet me from the centre of the darkness. It would be easy enough to meet my imagination half-way with fact, and say that a cold hand grasped my own and led me by invisible paths into the unknown depths of the grove; but at any rate, without stumbling, and always with the positive knowledge that I was going straight towards the desired object, I pressed on confidently and securely into the wood. So dark was it that, at first, not a single star-beam pierced the roof of branches overhead; and, as we moved forward side by side, the trees shifted silently past

us in long lines, row upon row, squadron upon squadron, like the units of a vast, soundless army.

And, at length, we came to a comparatively open space where the trees halted upon us for a while, and, looking up, I saw the white river of the sky beginning to yield to the influence of a new light that now seemed spreading swiftly across the heavens.

"It is the dawn coming," said the voice at my side that I certainly recognised, but which seemed almost like a whispering from the trees, "and we are now in the heart of the Wood of the Dead."

We seated ourselves on a moss-covered boulder and waited the coming of the sun. With marvellous swiftness, it seemed to me, the light in the east passed into the radiance of early morning, and when the wind awoke and began to whisper in the tree tops, the first rays of the risen sun fell between the trunks and rested in a circle of gold at our feet.

"Now, come with me," whispered my companion in the same deep voice, "for time has no existence here, and that which I would show you is already _there_!"

We trod gently and silently over the soft pine needles. Already the sun was high over our heads, and the shadows of the trees coiled closely about their feet. The wood became denser again, but occasionally we passed through little open bits where we could smell the hot sunshine and the dry, baked pine needles. Then, presently, we came to the edge of the grove, and I saw a hayfield lying in the blaze of day, and two horses basking lazily with switching tails in the shafts of a laden hay-waggon.

So complete and vivid was the sense of reality, that I remember the grateful realisation of the cool shade where we sat and looked out upon the hot world beyond.

The last pitchfork had tossed up its fragrant burden, and the great horses were already straining in the shafts after the driver, as he walked slowly in front with one hand upon their bridles. He was a stalwart fellow, with sunburned neck and hands. Then, for the first time, I noticed, perched aloft upon the trembling throne of hay, the figure of a slim young girl. I could not see her face, but her brown hair escaped in disorder from a white sun-bonnet, and her still browner hands held a well-worn hay rake. She was laughing and talking with the driver, and he, from time to time, cast up at her ardent glances of admiration--glances that won instant smiles and soft blushes in response.

The cart presently turned into the roadway that skirted the edge of the wood where we were sitting. I watched the scene with intense interest

and became so much absorbed in it that I quite forgot the manifold, strange steps by which I was permitted to become a spectator.

"Come down and walk with me," cried the young fellow, stopping a moment in front of the horses and opening wide his arms. "Jump! and I'll catch you!"

"Oh, oh," she laughed, and her voice sounded to me as the happiest, merriest laughter I had ever heard from a girl's throat. "Oh, oh! that's all very well. But remember I'm Queen of the Hay, and I must ride!"

"Then I must come and ride beside you," he cried, and began at once to climb up by way of the driver's seat. But, with a peal of silvery laughter, she slipped down easily over the back of the hay to escape him, and ran a little way along the road. I could see her quite clearly, and noticed the charming, natural grace of her movements, and the loving expression in her eyes as she looked over her shoulder to make sure he was following. Evidently, she did not wish to escape for long, certainly not for ever.

In two strides the big, brown swain was after her, leaving the horses to do as they pleased. Another second and his arms would have caught the slender waist and pressed the little body to his heart. But, just at that instant, the old man beside me uttered a peculiar cry. It was low and thrilling, and it went through me like a sharp sword.

HE had called her by her own name--and she had heard.

For a second she halted, glancing back with frightened eyes. Then, with a brief cry of despair, the girl swerved aside and dived in swiftly among the shadows of the trees.

But the young man saw the sudden movement and cried out to her passionately--

"Not that way, my love! Not that way! It's the Wood of the Dead!"

She threw a laughing glance over her shoulder at him, and the wind caught her hair and drew it out in a brown cloud under the sun. But the next minute she was close beside me, lying on the breast of my companion, and I was certain I heard the words repeatedly uttered with many sighs: "Father, you called, and I have come. And I come willingly, for I am very, very tired."

At any rate, so the words sounded to me, and mingled with them I seemed to catch the answer in that deep, thrilling whisper I already knew: "And you shall sleep, my child, sleep for a long, long time, until it is time for you to begin the journey again."

In that brief second of time I had recognised the face and voice of the inn-keeper's daughter, but the next minute a dreadful wail broke from the lips of the young man, and the sky grew suddenly as dark as night, the wind rose and began to toss the branches about us, and the whole scene was swallowed up in a wave of utter blackness.

Again the chill fingers seemed to seize my hand, and I was guided by the way I had come to the edge of the wood, and crossing the hayfield still slumbering in the starlight, I crept back to the inn and went to bed.

A year later I happened to be in the same part of the country, and the memory of the strange summer vision returned to me with the added softness of distance. I went to the old village and had tea under the same orchard trees at the same inn.

But the little maid of the inn did not show her face, and I took occasion to enquire of her father as to her welfare and her whereabouts.

"Married, no doubt," I laughed, but with a strange feeling that clutched at my heart.

"No, sir," replied the inn-keeper sadly, "not married--though she was just going to be--but dead. She got a sunstroke in the hayfields, just a few days after you were here, if I remember rightly, and she was gone from us in less than a week."

The Poison Of Asps

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Freaks of Mayfair*, by E. F. Benson

Horace Campbell has an unerring gift of smudging whatever he speaks of. As he speaks most of the time, he manages to smudge a good deal, and in consequence is in great demand at somewhat smudgy houses by reason of his appropriate and amusing conversation. Every decent man would like to kick him, and every nice woman would like to slap his fat white face, and so his habitats are the establishments of those not so foolishly particular. But though he lunches and dines without intermission at other people's houses, he is in no degree one who sings for his dinner, for he has a quite distinct career of his own, and spends his mornings earning not daily bread only, but truffles and asparagus and all the more expensive foods, by teaching other people to sing. His knowledge of voice-production is quite unrivalled, and he could probably, if he chose, turn a corn-crake into a contralto. The enormous fees that he charges thus enable him to compress into three hours the period of his working day, and during that time he is the father and mother of most of the beautiful noises that next year will be heard rising from human

throats at concerts and opera-houses. Then, his business being over and his pocket fat, he puts on his black morning coat, and his cloth-topped shoes, his grey silk tie with the pearl tie-pin, and goes forth to cause himself as well as his pocket to grow fat, and makes a music of his own.

Now his thesis, his working hypothesis, the basis of his conversation, is this. There are always several possible causes which may account for all that happens in the busy little world of London, and in discussing such happenings, he invariably assumes the smudgiest and more scandalous cause. A few instances will make this clear.

Example (1): John Smith is engaged to Eliza Jones.

Possible causes:

(i.) John Smith loves Eliza Jones and Eliza Jones loves John Smith.

(ii.) John Smith is after Eliza Jones's money.

(iii.) It was high time that John Smith did marry Eliza Jones.

Of these possible causes Horace Campbell leaves cause (i.) out of the question as not worth consideration. Cause (ii.) may account for it, but he invariably prefers cause (iii.).

Or again--

Example (2): Mrs. Snookes went to the opera with Mr. Snookes.

Probable causes:

(i.) Husband and wife went to the opera because they like going to the opera.

(ii.) Mrs. Snookes has an affair with the famous tenor Signor Topnotari.

(iii.) Mr. Snookes is paid £2:2:0 a night to applaud the soprano Signora Beeinalt.

It is idle to point out which cause Horace Campbell proceeds to discuss.

Example (3): An eminent statesman goes into the country for a week-end.

Possible causes:

(i.) The eminent statesman needs rest.

(ii.) 'Somebody' goes with him.

Horace Campbell's law of causation again applies.

Here then is the postulate which lies at the root of his conversation, his standpoint towards life. He does not bear ill-will towards those on whose conduct he habitually places the worst conceivable motive, and he has no political or personal objection to the eminent statesman, whom he would be very glad to know: it is merely that a nasty thing perches on his mind with greater facility than a nice one, and evokes greater sympathy there. Scandalous innuendoes seem to him more amusing than innocent interpretations, and so too, it appears, do they seem to those at whose tables he makes himself so entertaining. His stories are considered 'too killing,' whereas there is nothing very killing about the notion that Mr. and Mrs. Snookes went to the opera because they liked music. Also he has a perfect command of the French language, and often for the sake of guileless butlers and footmen he tells his little histories in French, which produces an impression of intrigue and wit in itself. Love-affairs, the theme round which he revolves, are no doubt of perennial human interest, but he has but little sympathy with a love-affair founded on or culminating in marriage. It must have some taint of the illicit to be worth his busy embroidering needle; the other has a touch of the bourgeois about it. Suggestiveness is more to his mind than statement, hints than assertions. To judge by his conversation you would think that he and the world generally swam in fathomless oceans of vice, but as far as conduct goes, he never swam a stroke. At the utmost he took off his shoes and stockings, and paddled at the extreme edge of that unprofitable sea. He just pruriently paddles there with his fat white feet....

It has been said that every decent man would like to kick him, but in justice to him it must be added that he is not nearly so unkindly disposed towards anybody. Decent men, like such bourgeois emotions as honest straightforward love, only bore him, and he merely yawns in their faces. But though he has no direct malice, no desire to injure anyone by his *_petites saletés_*, he has, it must be confessed, a grudge against all those whom he considers collectively as being at the top of the tree. He has enough brains to know that the majority of the class Mr. and Mrs. Not-quite-in-it, who are his intimate circle, have not a quarter of his cleverness, but what he has not brains to see is that the very gifts of belittlement and scandal-scattering that make him such a tremendous success with them, are exactly the gifts which prevent his being welcomed in more desirable circles. It would be altogether beyond the mark to hint that he is in any way under a cloud: at the most he is, like the cuttle-fish, enveloped in an obscurity of his own making. Though perfectly honest himself, he would certainly, if anyone remarked that honesty was the best policy, retort that successful swindling was at least a good second, and it is exactly that habit of mind that causes him to be *_planté là_*, as he would say himself, among the Not-quite-in-its. Humour, of which he has plenty, is no doubt the salt of life, but all his humour has gone rancid. It is there all right, but

it has gone bad, and gives a healthy digestion aches. But flies settle on it, and are none the worse. Though there is no direct malice in him towards those against whom he so incessantly uses his little toy tar-squirt, there is a distinct trait of jealousy, that one vice that is quite barren of pleasure, for of all the commandments there is none except the tenth the breaking of which does not bring to the transgressor some momentary gratification. That, too, accounts in large measure for the raptures he causes at the tables of the Not-quite-in-its, for they, like him, yearn to be quite in it, and not being able to manage it, applaud this dainty use of the tar-squirt against those who are. They have plenty of money, plenty of brains, plenty of artistic tastes, and they would certainly scream with laughter if they were told that it was just the want of a very bourgeois quality, namely good-nature, that bars the fulfilment of their just desires. Yet such is the case: they are not 'kind inside.' They are (ever so slightly) pleased at other people's checks and set-backs, and herein in the main consists their second-rateness.

Horace Campbell is perhaps the priest of this little nest of asps, and without doubt the priestess is the amazing Mrs. Dealtry, now flaming in the sunset of her witty discontented life. She is tall and corpulent, with wonderful vitality and quantities of auburn hair and carmine lip salve, and mauve scarves, and when she and Horace Campbell get together, as they do two or three times a day, to discuss their friends, those who die, so to speak, and are dismissed by them, are the lucky ones, for the rest they drive with whips through the London streets, without a rag of reputation to cover them. She, like Horace, has plenty of humour, and if the sight of a wrinkled old woman with a painted face, and one high-heeled foot in the grave, dealing out horrible innuendoes like a pack of cards, does not make you feel sick, you will enjoy her conversation very much. Years ago she started the theory that Horace was devotedly attached to her, and for her sake committed celibacy, and though she has changed her friends more often than she changes her dress, she still sticks to the gratifying belief that she has wrecked his life.

'Horace might have done anything,' she is accustomed to say, 'but he would always waste his time on me. Poor Horace! such a dear, isn't he, but how much aged in this last year or two. And I can't think why somebody doesn't tell him to have his teeth attended to.'

Then as Horace entered the room she made a place for him on the sofa.

'Monster, come here at once,' she said. 'Now what is the truth about Lady Genge's sudden disappearance? I am told he simply turned her out of the house, which any decent man would have done years ago.'

'He did,' said Horace, 'and she always came in again by the back door. This time he has turned her out of the back door. On dit que "Cherchez

le valet.””

Mrs. Dealtry gave a little scream of laughter.

‘Last time it was the girl’s music master,’ she said. ‘She will never take servants with a character.’

‘Character for what?’ asked Horace. ‘Sobriety?’

‘She was at the opera three nights ago, but blind drunk, though you mustn’t repeat that. I’m told she had her tiara upside down with the points over her forehead. Alice Chignonette, as I call her, was with her, a small horse-hair bun glued with seccotine to the back of her head. She hadn’t got any clothes on, but was slightly distempered.’

‘She always is slightly distempered, except when she holds four aces and four queens, and has seen the whole of her opponent’s hand so that she knows whether to finesse or not. And is it true that the Weasel has stopped her allowance?’

‘Yes, he gave her a coat of dyed rabbit-skins with a card _pour prendre congé_, and a second-class ticket to Milwaukee where he first found her on the sidwalkee. What people get into society now! Large bare shoulders, a perpetual cold in the head and the manners of a Yahoo are a sufficient passport. One can’t go anywhere without running into them. Not a soul would speak to her at Milwaukee so she came to London for whitewash.’

‘And distemper.’

‘She brought that with her. The Weasel carried it in his grip-sack.’

Horace took an enamelled cigarette-case out of his pocket and lit a cigarette that smelt of musk.

‘I saw Lily Broomsgrove to-day,’ he said. ‘She has become slightly broader than she is long.’

‘Her conversation always was. It consists of seven improper adjectives and one expletive. That is why she is so popular. She can be easily understood.’

‘She seemed to have an understanding with Pip Rippington. He was enclosed.’

‘He ought to be. Haven’t you heard? That golf club he started, you know. Apparently golf was a terminological inexactitude. I suppose it will all be common property soon, so I may as well tell you.’

Mrs. Dealtry proceeded to tell them, and all the little asps hissed with pleasure....

Now there was very little truth in all that Mrs. Dealtry had been saying, and perhaps none at all in Horace Campbell's contribution, yet while each of them really knew the other was a liar, each drank it all in with the utmost avidity. Such malice as there was about them was completely impotent malice: it could not possibly matter to Pip Rippington, for instance, whoever he was, that Mrs. Dealtry and Horace had been inventing stories about him. That he had founded a golf club was perfectly true; that Mrs. Dealtry had not been welcomed as a member of it was true also, though there was a needless *_suppressio veri_* about this fact, as everybody present was perfectly aware of it. But it amused them in some rancid manner to vent spleen, just as it perhaps amuses asps to bite. Only, and here was one of Time's revenges, nobody ever cared what either of them said. To throw mud enough is proverbially supposed to ensure the sticking of some of it, but in the case of them and those like them, the proverb was falsified. They had said that sort of thing too often and too emphatically for anyone to attach the smallest importance to it; it was as if their victims had been inoculated for the poison of asps, and suffered no subsequent inconvenience from the bite. No one thought of bringing the laws about libel into play over them, any more than people think about invoking the protection of those laws against a taxi-driver who compensates himself in compliments for the tip he has not received. If they have any sense they get themselves into their houses and leave the vituperative driver outside. That is just what decent people did with Horace Campbell. He is outside still, biting the paving-stones.

The pity of it all is the appalling waste among asps of brains, inventive faculty, and humour. If only their gifts were used to some laudable or even only innocent purpose, the world in general would gain a great deal of entertainment, and the asps of the popularity and success that they secretly crave for. As it is, some sort of moral ptomaine has infected them, some invasion of microbes that turns their wit into poison. Whatsoever things are loathsome, whatsoever things are of ill report, they think of those things. All their wit, too, goes to waste: nobody cares two straws what they say, and the bitten are pathetically unconscious of having received any injury whatever. That fact, perhaps, if they could thoroughly realise it, might draw their fangs.



A Nightmare Of The Doldrums

Project Gutenberg's *The Phantom Death etc.*, by William Clark Russell

The *_Justitia_* was a smart little barque of 395 tons. I had viewed her with something of admiration as she lay in mid-stream in the Hooghly—somewhere off the Coolie Bazaar, I think it was. There was steam then coming to Calcutta, though not as steam now is; very little of it was in any sense palatial, and some of the very best of it was to be as promptly distanced under given conditions of weather by certain of the clippers, clouded with studding-sails and flying-kites to the starry buttons of their skysail mastheads, as the six-knot ocean tramp of to-day is to be outrun by the four-masted leviathan thrashing through it to windward with her yards fore and aft.

I—representing in those days a large Birmingham firm of dealers in the fal-lal industries—had wished to make my way from Calcutta to Capetown. I saw the *_Justitia_* and took a fancy to her; I admired the long, low, piratic run of her hull as she lay with straining hawsepipes on the rushing stream of the Hooghly; upon which, as you watched, there might go by in the space of an hour some half-score at least of dead natives made ghastly canoes of by huge birds, erect upon the corpses, burying their beaks as they sailed along.

I found out that the *_Justitia_* was one of the smartest of the Thames and East India traders of that time, memorable on one occasion for having reeled off a clean seventeen knots by the log under a main topgallant-sail, set over a single-reefed topsail. It was murmured, indeed, that the mate who hove that log was drunk when he counted the knots; yet the dead reckoning tallied with the next day's observations. I called upon the agents, was told that the *_Justitia_* was not a passenger ship, but that I could hire a cabin for the run to Capetown if I chose; a sum in rupees, trifling compared with the cost of transit by steam, was named. I went on board, found the captain walking up and down under the awning, and agreeably killed an hour in a chat with as amiable a seaman as ever it was my good fortune to meet.

We sailed in the middle of July. Nothing worth talking about happened during our run down the Bay of Bengal. The crew foremost were all of them Englishmen; there were twelve, counting the cook and steward. The captain was a man named Cayzer; the only mate of the vessel was one William Perkins. The boatswain, a rough, short, hairy, immensely strong

man, acted as second mate and kept a look-out when Perkins was below. But he was entirely ignorant of navigation, and owned to me that he read with difficulty words of one syllable, and could not write.

I was the only passenger. My name, I may as well say here, is Thomas Barron. Our run to the south Ceylon parallels was slow and disappointing. The monsoon was light and treacherous, sometimes dying out in a sort of laughing, mocking gust till the whole ocean was a sheet-calm surface, as though the dependable trade wind was never again to blow.

“Oh yes,” said Captain Cayzer to me, “we’re used to the unexpected hereabouts. Monsoon or no monsoon, I’ll tell you what: you’re always safe in standing by for an Irishman’s hurricane down here.”

“And what sort of breeze is that?” I asked.

“An up-and-down calm,” said he; “as hard to know where it begins as to guess where it’ll end.”

However, thanks to the frequent trade puffs and other winds, which tasted not like the monsoon, we crawled through those latitudes which Ceylon spans, and fetched within a few degrees of the equator. In this part of the waters we were to be thankful for even the most trifling donation of catspaw, or for the equally small and short-lived mercy of the gust of the electric cloud. I forget how many days we were out from Calcutta: the matter is of no moment. I left my cabin one morning some hour after the sun had risen, by which time the decks had been washed down, and were already dry, with a salt sparkle as of bright white sand on the face of the planks, so roasting was it. I went into the head to get a bath under the pump there. I feel in memory, as I write, the exquisite sensation of that luxury of brilliant brine, cold as snow, melting through me from head to foot to the nimble plying of the pump-brake by a seaman.

It was a true tropic morning. The sea, of a pale lilac, flowed in a long-drawn, gentle heave of swell into the south-west; the glare of the early morning brooded in a sort of steamy whiteness in the atmosphere; the sea went working to its distant reaches, and floated into a dim blending of liquid air and water, so that you couldn’t tell where the sky ended; a weak, hot wind blew over the taffrail, but it was without weight. The courses swung to the swell without response to the breathings of the air; and on high the light cotton-white royals were scarcely curved by the delicate passage of the draught.

Yet the barque had steerage way. When I looked through the grating at her metal forefoot I saw the ripples plentiful as harp strings threading aft, and whilst I dried myself I watched the slow approach of a piece of timber hoary with barnacles, and venerable with long hairs of seaweed, amid and around which a thousand little fish were sporting, many-coloured as though a rainbow had been shivered.

I returned to my cabin, dressed, and stepped on to the quarter-deck, where I found some men spreading the awning, and the captain in a white straw hat viewing an object out upon the water through a telescope, and talking to the boatswain, who stood alongside.

“What do you see?” I asked.

“Something that resembles a raft,” answered the captain.

The thing he looked at was about a mile distant, some three points on the starboard bow. On pointing the telescope, I distinctly made out the fabric of a raft, fitted with a short mast, to which midway a bundle—it resembled a parcel—was attached. A portion of the raft was covered by a white sheet or cloth, whence dangled a short length of something chocolate-coloured, indistinguishable even with the glass, lifting and sinking as the raft rose and fell upon the flowing heave of the sea.

“This ocean,” said the captain, taking the glass from me, “is a big volume of tragic stories, and the artist who illustrates the book does it in that fashion,” and he nodded in the direction of the raft.

“What do you make of it, boatswain?” I asked.

“It looks to me,” he answered in his strong, harsh, deep voice, “like a religious job—one of them rafts the Burmah covies float away their dead on. I never see one afore, sir, but I’ve heard tell of such things.”

We sneaked stealthily towards the raft. It was seven bells—half-past seven—and the sailors ate their breakfast on the forecastle, that they might view the strange contrivance. The mate, Mr. Perkins, came on deck to relieve the boatswain, and, after inspecting the raft through the telescope, gave it as his opinion that it was a Malay floating bier—“a Mussulman trick of ocean burial, anyhow,” said he. “There should be a jar of water aboard the raft, and cakes and fruit for the corpse to regale on, if he ha’n’t been dead long.”

The steward announced breakfast; the captain told him to hold it back awhile. He was as curious as I to get a close view of the queer object with its white cloth and mast and parcel and chocolate-coloured fragment half in and half out like a barge’s leeboard, and he bade the man at the helm put the wheel over by a spoke or two; but the wind was nearly gone, the barque scarcely responded to the motion of her rudder, the thread-like lines at the cut-water had faded, and a roasting, oppressive calm was upon the water, whitening it out into a tingling sheen of quicksilver with a fiery shaft of blinding dazzle, solitary and splendid, working with the swell like some monstrous serpent of light right under the sun.

The raft was about six cables' lengths off us when the barque came to a dead stand, with a soft, universal hollowing in of her canvas from royal to course, as though, like something sentient, she delivered one final sigh before the swoon of the calm seized her. But now we were near enough to resolve the floating thing with the naked eye into details. It was a raft formed of bamboo canes. A mast about six feet tall was erected upon it; the dark thing over the edge proved a human leg, and, when the fabric lifted with the swell and raised the leg clear, we saw that the foot had been eaten away by fish, a number of which were swimming about the raft, sending little flashes of foam over the pale surface as they darted along with their back or dorsal fins exposed. They were all little fish; I saw no sharks. The body to which the leg belonged was covered by a white cloth. The captain called my attention to the parcel attached to the mast, and said that it possibly contained the food which the Malays leave beside their dead after burial.

"But let's go to breakfast now, Mr. Barron," said he, with a slow, reproachful, impatient look round the breathless scene of ocean. "If there's any amusement to be got out of that thing yonder there's a precious long, quiet day before us, I fear, for the entertainment."

We breakfasted, and in due course returned on deck. The slewing of the barque had caused the raft to shift its bearings, otherwise its distance remained as it was when we went below.

"Mr. Perkins," said the captain, "lower a boat and bring aboard that parcel from the raft's jury-mast, and likewise take a peep at the figure under the cloth, and report its sex and what it looks like."

I asked leave to go in the boat, and when she was lowered, with three men in her, I followed Mr. Perkins, and we rowed over to the raft. All above the frail bamboo contrivance the water was beautiful with the colours and movements of innumerable fish. As we approached we were greeted by an evil smell. The raft seemed to have been afloat for a considerable period; its submerged portion was green with marine adhesions or growths. The fellow in the bows of the boat, manœuvring with the boathook, cleverly snicked the parcel from the jury-mast and handed it along to the mate, who put it beside him without opening it, for that was to be the captain's privilege.

"Off with that cloth," said Mr. Perkins, "and then back water a bit out of this atmosphere."

The bowman jerked the cloth clear of the raft with his boathook; the white sheet floated like a snowflake upon the water for a few breaths, then slowly sank. The body exposed was stark naked and tawny. It was a male. I saw nothing revolting in the thing; it would have been otherwise perhaps had it been white. The hair was long and black, the nose aquiline, the mouth puckered into the aspect of a hare-lip; the gleam of

a few white teeth painted a ghastly contemptuous grin upon the dead face. The only shocking part was the footless leg.

“Shall I hook him overboard, sir?” said the bowman.

“No, let him take his ease as he lies,” answered the mate, and with that we returned to the barque.

We climbed over the side, the boat was hoisted to the davits, and Mr. Perkins took the parcel out of the stern-sheets and handed it to the captain. The cover was a kind of fine canvas, very neatly stitched with white thread. Captain Cayzer ripped through the stitching with his knife, and exposed a couple of books bound in some kind of skin or parchment. They were probably the Koran, but the characters none of us knew. The captain turned them about for a bit, and I stood by looking at them; he then replaced them in their canvas cover and put them down upon the skylight, and by-and-by, on his leaving the deck, he took them below to his cabin.

The moon rose about ten that night. She came up hot, distorted, with a sullen face belted with vapour, but was soon clear of the dewy thickness over the horizon and showering a pure greenish silver upon the sea. She made the night lovely and cool: her reflection sparkled in the dew along the rails, and her beam whitened out the canvas into the tender softness of wreaths of cloud motionless upon the summit of some dark heap of mountain. I looked for the raft and saw it plainly, and it is not in language to express how the sight of that frail cradle of death deepened the universal silence and expanded the prodigious distances defined by the stars, and accentuated the tremendous spirit of loneliness that slept like a presence in that wide region of sea and air.

There had not been a stir of wind all day: not the faintest breathing of breeze had tarnished the sea down to the hour of midnight when, feeling weary, I withdrew to my cabin. I slept well, spite of the heat and the cockroaches, and rose at seven. I found the steward in the cabin. His face wore a look of concern, and on seeing me he instantly exclaimed—

“The captain seems very ill, sir. Might you know anything of physic? Neither Mr. Perkins nor me can make out what’s the matter.”

“I know nothing of physic,” I answered, “but I’ll look in on him.”

I stepped to his door, knocked, and entered. Captain Cayzer lay in a bunk under a middling-sized porthole: the cabin was full of the morning light. I started and stood at gaze, scarce crediting my sight, so shocked and astounded was I by the dreadful change which had happened in the night in the poor man’s appearance. His face was blue, and I remarked a cadaverous sinking in of the eyeballs: the lips were livid, the hands likewise blue, but strangely wrinkled like a washer-woman’s. On seeing me he asked

in a husky whispering voice for a drink of water. I handed him a full pannikin, which he drained feverishly, and then began to moan and cry out, making some weak miserable efforts to rub first one arm, then the other, then his legs.

The steward stood in the doorway. I turned to him, sensible that my face was ashen, and asked some questions. I then said, "Where is Mr. Perkins?"

He was on deck. I bade the steward attend to the captain, and passed through the hatch to the quarter-deck, where I found the mate.

"Do you know that the captain is very ill?" said I.

"Do I know it, sir? Why, yes. I've been sitting by him chafing his limbs and giving him water to drink, and attending to him in other ways. What is it, d'ye know, sir?"

"_Cholera!_" said I.

"Oh, my God, I hope not!" he exclaimed. "How could it be cholera? How could cholera come aboard?"

"A friend of mine died of cholera at Rangoon when I was there," said I. "I recognize the looks, and will swear to the symptoms."

"But how could it have come aboard?" he exclaimed, in a voice low but agitated.

My eyes, as he asked the question, were upon the raft. I started and cried, "Is that thing still there?"

"Ay," said the mate, "we haven't budged a foot all night."

The suspicion rushed upon me whilst I looked at the raft, and ran my eyes over the bright hot morning sky and the burnished surface of sea, sheeting into dimness in the misty junction of heaven and water.

"I shouldn't be surprised," said I, "to discover that we brought the cholera aboard with us yesterday from that dead man's raft yonder."

"How is cholera to be caught in that fashion?" exclaimed Mr. Perkins, pale and a bit wild in his way of staring at me.

"We may have brought the poison aboard in the parcel of books."

"Is cholera to be caught so?"

"Undoubtedly. The disease may be propagated by human intercourse. Why not, then, by books which have been handled by cholera-poisoned people,

or by the atmosphere of a body dead of the plague?" I added, pointing at the raft.

"No man amongst us is safe, then, now?" cried the mate.

"I'm no doctor," said I; "but I know this, that contagious poisons, such as scarlet fever and glanders, may retain their properties in a dormant state for years. I've heard tell of scores of instances of cholera being propagated through articles of dress. Depend upon it," said I, "that we brought the poison aboard with us yesterday from that accursed death-raft yonder."

"Aren't the books in the captain's cabin?" said the mate.

"Are they?"

"He took them below yesterday, sir."

"The sooner they're overboard the better," I exclaimed, and returned to the cabin.

I went to the captain, and found the steward rubbing him. The disease appeared to be doing its work with horrible rapidity; the eyes were deeply sunk and red; every feature had grown sharp and pinched as after a long wasting disease; the complexion was thick and muddy. Those who have watched beside cholera know that terrific changes may take place in a few minutes. I cast my eyes about for the parcel of books, and, spying it, took a stick from a corner of the berth, hooked up the parcel, and, passing it through the open porthole, shook it overboard.

The captain followed my movements with a languid rolling of his eyes but spoke not, though he groaned often, and frequently cried out. I could not in the least imagine what was proper to be done. His was the most important life on board the ship, and yet I could only look on and helplessly watch him expire.

He lived till the evening, and seldom spoke save to call upon God to release him. I had found an opportunity to tell him that he was ill of the cholera, and explained how it happened that the horrible distemper was on board, for I was absolutely sure we had brought it with us in that parcel of books; but his anguish was so keen, his death so close then, that I cannot be sure he understood me. He died shortly after seven o'clock, and I have since learnt that that time is one of the critical hours in cholera.

When the captain was dead I went to the mate, and advised him to cast the body overboard at once. He called to some of the hands. They brought the body out just as the poor fellow had died, and, securing a weight to the feet, they lifted the corpse over the rail, and dropped it. No

burial service was read. We were all too panic-stricken for reverence. We got rid of the body quickly, the men handling the thing as though they felt the death in it stealing into them through their fingers—hoping and praying that with it the cholera would go. It was almost dark when this hurried funeral was ended. I stood beside the mate, looking round the sea for a shadow of wind in any quarter. The boatswain, who had been one of the men that handled the body, came up to us.

“Ain’t there nothing to be done with that corpus out there?” he exclaimed, pointing with a square hand to the raft. “The men are agreed that there’ll come no wind whilst that there dead blackie keeps afloat. And ain’t he enough to make a disease of the hatmosphere itself, from horizon to horizon?”

I waited for the mate to answer. He said gloomily, “I’m of the poor captain’s mind. You’ll need to make something fast to the body to sink it. Who’s to handle it? I’ll ask no man to do what I wouldn’t do myself, and rat me if I’d do _that_!”

“We brought the poison aboard by visiting the raft, bo’sun,” said I. “Best leave the thing alone. The corpse is too far off to corrupt the air, as you suppose; though the imagination’s nigh as bad as the reality,” said I, spitting.

“If there’s any of them game to sink the thing, may they do it?” said the boatswain. “For if there’s ne’er a breeze of wind to come while it’s there——”

“Chaw!” said the mate. “But try ’em, if you will. They may take the boat when the moon’s up, should there come no wind first.”

An hour later the steward told me that two of the sailors were seized with cramps and convulsions. After this no more was said about taking the boat and sinking the body. The mate went into the forecastle. On his return, he begged me to go and look at the men.

“Better make sure that it’s cholera with them too, sir,” said he. “You know the signs;” and, folding his arms, he leaned against the bulwarks in a posture of profound dejection.

I went forward and descended the foreshuttle, and found myself in a small cave. The heat was overpowering; there was no air to pass through the little hatch; the place was dimly lighted by an evil-smelling lamp hanging under a beam, but, poor as the illumination was, I could see by it, and when I looked at the two men and spoke to them, I saw how it was, and came away sick at heart, and half dead with the hot foul air of the forecastle, and in deepest distress of mind, moreover, through perceiving that the two men had formed a part of the crew of the boat when we visited the raft.

One died at six o'clock next morning, and the other at noon; but before this second man was dead three others had been attacked, and one of them was the mate. And still never a breath of air stirred the silver surface of the sea.

The mate was a strong man, and his fear of death made the conflict dreadful to behold. I was paralyzed at first by the suddenness of the thing and the tremendous character of our calamity, and, never doubting that I must speedily prove a victim as being one who had gone in the boat, I cast myself down upon a sofa in the cabin and there sat, waiting for the first signal of pain, sometimes praying, or striving to pray, and seeking hard to accustom my mind to the fate I regarded as inevitable. But a keen and biting sense of my cowardice came to my rescue. I sprang to my feet and went to the mate's berth, and nursed him till he died, which was shortly before midnight of the day of his seizure—so swift and sure was the poison we had brought from the raft. He was dropped over the side, and in a few hours later he was followed by three others. I cannot be sure of my figures: it was a time of delirium, and I recall some details of it with difficulty, but I am pretty sure that by the morning of the fourth day of our falling in with the accursed raft the ship's company had been reduced to the boatswain and five men, making, with myself, seven survivors of fifteen souls who had sailed from Calcutta.

It was some time about the middle of the fifth day—two men were then lying stricken in the forecabin—the boatswain and a couple of seamen came aft to the quarter-deck where I was standing. The wheel was deserted: no man had grasped it since the captain's death; indeed, there was nothing to be done at the helm. The ocean floated in liquid glass; the smell of frying paint, bubbled into cinders by the roasting rays, rose like the stench of a second plague to the nostrils. The boatswain and his companions had been drinking; no doubt they had broached the rum casks below. They had never entered the cabin to my knowledge, nor do I believe they got their liquor from there. The boatswain carried a heavy weight of some sort, bound in canvas, with a long laniard attached to it. He flung the parcel into the quarter-boat, and roared out—

"If that don't drag the blistered cuss out of sight I'll show the fired carcass the road myself. Cholera or no cholera, here goes!"

"What are you going to do?" said I.

"Do?" he cried; "why sink that there plague out of it, so as to give us the chance of a breeze. Ain't this hell's delight? What's a-going to blow us clear whilst he keeps watch?" And he nodded with a fierce drunken gesture towards the raft.

"You'll have to handle the body to sink it," said I. "You're well men, now; keep well, won't you? The two who are going may be the next taken."

The three of them roared out drunkenly together, so muddling their speech with oaths that I did not understand them. I walked aft, not liking their savage looks. Shouting and cursing plentifully, they lowered the boat, got into her by descending the falls, and shoved off for the raft. They drew alongside the bamboo contrivance, and I looked to see the boat capsize, so wildly did they sway her in their wrath and drink as they fastened the weight to the foot of the body. They then sank the corpse, and, with the loom of their oars, hammered at the raft till the bamboos were scattered like a sheaf of walking-sticks cut adrift. They now returned to the barque, clambered aboard, and hoisted the boat.

The two sick men in the forecastle were at this time looked after by a seaman named Archer. I have said it was the fifth day of the calm; of the ship's company the boatswain and five men were living, but two were dying, and that, not counting me, left three as yet well and able to get about.

This man Archer, when the boatswain and his companions went forward, came out of the forecastle, and drank at the scuttle-butt in the waist. He walked unsteadily, with that effort after stateliness which is peculiar to tipsy sailors; his eyes wandered, and he found some difficulty in hitting the bunghole with the dipper. Yet he was a civil sort of man when sober; I had occasionally chatted with him during his tricks at the wheel; and, feeling the need of some one to talk to about our frightful situation, I walked up to him, and asked how the sick men did.

"Dying fast," he answered, steadying himself by leaning against the scuttle-butt, "and a-ravin' like screech-owls."

"What's to be done, Archer?"

"Oh, God alone He knows!" answered the man, and here he put his knuckles into his eyes, and began to cry and sob.

"Is it possible that this calm can last much longer?"

"It may last six weeks," he answered, whimpering. "Down here, when the wind's drawn away by the sun, it may take six weeks afore it comes on to blow. Six weeks of calm down here ain't thought nothen of," and here he burst out blubbering again.

"Where do you get your liquor from?" said I.

"Oh, don't talk of it, don't talk of it!" he replied, with a maudlin shake of the head.

"Drinking'll not help you," said I; "you'll all be the likelier to catch the malady for drinking. This is a sort of time, I should think, when

a man most wants his senses. A breeze may come, and we ought to decide where to steer the barque to. The vessel's under all plain sail, too, and here we are, four men and a useless passenger, should it come on to blow suddenly——”

“We didn't sign on under you,” he interrupted, with a tipsy scowl, “and as ye ain't no good either as sailor or doctor, you can keep your blooming sarmons to yourself till they're asked for.”

I had now not only to fear the cholera but to dread the men. My mental distress was beyond all power of words to convey: I wonder it did not quickly drive me crazy and hurry me overboard. I lurked in the cabin to be out of sight of the fellows, and all the while my imagination was tormenting me with the first pangs of the cholera, and every minute I was believing I had the mortal malady. Sometimes I would creep up the companion steps and cautiously peer around, and always I beheld the same dead, faint blue surface of sea stretching like an ocean in a dream into the faint indefinable distances. But shocking as that calm was to me, I very well knew there was nothing wonderful or preternatural in it. Our forefoot five days before had struck the equatorial zone called the Doldrums, and at a period of the year when a fortnight or even a month of atmospheric lifelessness might be as confidently looked for as the rising and setting of the sun.

At nine o'clock that night I was sitting at the cabin table with biscuit and a little weak brandy and water before me, when I was hailed by some one at the open skylight above. It was black night, though the sky was glorious with stars: the moon did not rise till after eleven. I had lighted the cabin lamp, and the sheen of it was upon the face of Archer.

“The two men are dead and gone,” said he, “and now the bo'sun and Bill are down. There's Jim dead drunk in his hammock. I can't stand the cries of sick men. What with liquor and pain, the air below suffocates me. Let me come aft, sir, and keep along with you. I'm sober now. Oh, Christ, have mercy upon me! It's my turn next, ain't it?”

I passed a glass of brandy to him through the skylight, then joined him on deck, and told him that the two dead bodies must be thrown overboard, and the sick men looked to. For some time he refused to go forward with me, saying that he was already poisoned and deadly sick, and a dying man, and that I had no right to expect that one dying man should wait upon another. However, I was determined to turn the dead out of the ship in any case, for in freeing the vessel of the remains of the victims might lie my salvation. He consented to help me at last, and we went into the forecabin, and between us got the bodies out of their bunks, and dropped them, weighted, over the rail. The boatswain and the other men lay groaning and writhing and crying for water; cursing at intervals. A coil of black smoke went up from the lamp flame to the blackened beam under which the light was burning. The atmosphere was horrible. I bade Archer

help me to carry a couple of mattresses on to the forecastle, and we got the sick men through the hatch, and they lay there in the coolness with plenty of cold water beside them and a heaven of stars above, instead of a low-pitched ceiling of grimy beam and plank dark with processions of cockroaches, and dim with the smoke of the stinking slush lamp.

All this occupied us till about half-past ten. When I went aft I was seized with nausea, and, sinking upon the skylight, dabbled my brow in the dew betwixt the lifted lids for the refreshment of the moisture. I believed that my time had come, and that this sickness was the cholera. Archer followed me, and seeing me in a posture of torment, as he supposed, concluded that I was a dead man. He flung himself upon the deck with a groan, and lay motionless, crying out at intervals, "God, have mercy! God, have mercy!" and that was all.

In about half an hour's time the sensation of sickness passed. I went below for some brandy, swallowed half a glass, and returning with a dram for Archer, but the man had either swooned or fallen asleep, and I let him lie. I had my senses perfectly, but felt shockingly weak in body, and I could think of nothing consolatory to diminish my exquisite distress of mind. Indeed, the capacity of realization grew unendurably poignant. I imagined too well, I figured too clearly. I pictured myself as lying dead upon the deck of the barque, found a corpse by some passing vessel after many days; and so I dreamt, often breaking away from my horrible imaginations with moans and starts, then pacing the deck to rid me of the nightmare hag of thought till I was in a fever, then cooling my head by laying my cheek upon the dew-covered skylight.

By-and-by the moon rose, and I sat watching it. In half an hour she was a bright light in the east, and the shaft of silver that slept under her stretched to the barque's side. It was just then that one of the two sick men on the forecastle sent up a yell. The dreadful note rang through the vessel, and dropped back to the deck in an echo from the canvas. A moment after I saw a figure get on to the forecastle-rail and spring overboard. I heard the splash of his body, and, bounding over to Archer, who lay on the deck, I pulled and hauled at him, roaring out that one of the sick men had jumped overboard, and then rushed forward and looked over into the water in the place where the man had leapt, but saw nothing, not even a ripple.

I turned and peered close at the man who lay on the forecastle, and discovered that the fellow who had jumped was the boatswain. I went again to the rail to look, and lifted a coil of rope from a pin, ready to fling the fakes to the man, should he rise. The moonlight was streaming along the ocean on this side of the ship, and now, when I leaned over the rail for the second time, I saw a figure close under the bows. I stared a minute or two; the colour of the body blended with the gloom, yet the moonlight was upon him too, and then it was that after looking awhile, and observing the thing to lie motionless, I perceived that it was the

body that had been upon the raft! No doubt the extreme horror raised in me by the sight of the poisonous thing beheld in that light and under such conditions crazed me. I have a recollection of laughing wildly, and of defying the dark floating shape in insane language. I remember that I shook my fist and spat at it, and that I turned to seek for something to hurl at the body, and it may have been that in the instant of turning, my senses left me, for after this I can recall no more.

* * * * *

The sequel to this tragic and extraordinary experience will be found in the following statement, made by the people of the ship Forfarshire, from Calcutta to Liverpool:—"August 29, 1857. When in latitude 2° 15' N. and longitude 79° 40' E. we sighted a barque under all plain sail, apparently abandoned. The breeze was very scanty, and though we immediately shifted our helm for her on judging that she was in distress, it took us all the morning to approach her within hailing distance. Everything looked right with her aloft, but the wheel was deserted, and there were no signs of anything living in her. We sent a boat in charge of the second officer, who returned and informed us that the barque was the Justitia, of London. We knew that she was from Calcutta, for we had seen her lying in the river. The second officer stated that there were three dead bodies aboard, one in a hammock in the forecastle, a second on a mattress on the forecastle, and a third against the coamings of the main-hatch; there was also a fourth man lying at the heel of the port cathead—he did not seem to be dead. On this Dr. Davison was requested to visit the barque, and he was put aboard by the second officer. He returned quickly with one of the men, whom he instantly ordered to be stripped and put into a warm bath, and his clothes thrown overboard. He said that the dead showed unmistakable signs of having died from cholera. We proceeded, not deeming it prudent to have anything further to do with the ill-fated craft. The person we had rescued remained insensible for two days; his recovery was then slow, but sure, thanks to the skilful treatment of Dr. Davison. He informed us that his name was Thomas Barron, and that he was a passenger on board the Justitia for Capetown. He was the travelling representative of a large Birmingham firm. The barque had on the preceding Friday week fallen in with a raft bearing a dead body. A boat was sent to bring away a parcel from the raft's mast, and it is supposed that the contents of the parcel communicated the cholera. There were fifteen souls when the vessel left Calcutta, and all perished except the passenger, Thomas Barron."



Lubrietta.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Stoneground Ghost Tales*, by E. G. Swain

For the better understanding of this narrative we shall furnish the reader with a few words of introduction. It amounts to no more than a brief statement of facts which Mr. Batchel obtained from the Lady Principal of the European College in Puna, but the facts nevertheless are important. The narrative itself was obtained from Mr. Batchel with difficulty: he was disposed to regard it as unsuitable for publication because of the delicate nature of the situations with which it deals. When, however, it was made clear to him that it would be recorded in such a manner as would interest only a very select body of readers, his scruples were overcome, and he was induced to communicate the experience now to be related. Those who read it will not fail to see that they are in a manner pledged to deal very discreetly with the knowledge they are privileged to share.

Lubrietta Rodria is described by her Lady Principal as an attractive and high-spirited girl of seventeen, belonging to the Purple of Indian commerce. Her nationality was not precisely known; but drawing near, as she did, to a marriageable age, and being courted by more than one eligible suitor, she was naturally an object of great interest to her schoolfellows, with whom her personal beauty and amiable temper had always made her a favourite. She was not, the Lady Principal thought, a girl who would be regarded in Christian countries as of very high principle; but none the less, she was one whom it was impossible not to like.

Her career at the college had ended sensationally. She had been immoderately anxious about her final examination, and its termination had found her in a state of collapse. They had at once removed her to her father's house in the country, where she received such nursing and assiduous attention as her case required. It was apparently of no avail. For three weeks she lay motionless, deprived of speech, and voluntarily, taking no food. Then for a further period of ten days she lay in a plight still more distressing. She lost all consciousness, and, despite the assurance of the doctors, her parents could hardly be persuaded that she lived.

Her _fiancé_ who by this time had been declared, was in despair, not only from natural affection for Lubrietta, but from remorse. It was his intellectual ambition that had incited her to the eagerness

in study which was threatening such dire results, and it was well understood that neither of the lovers would survive these anxious days of watching if they were not to be survived by both.

After ten days, however, a change supervened. Lubrietta came back to life amid the frenzied rejoicing of the household and all her circle. She recovered her health and strength with incredible speed, and within three months was married--as the Lady Principal had cause to believe, with the happiest prospects.

* * * * *

Mr. Batchel had not, whilst residing at Stoneground, lost touch with the University which had given him his degree, and in which he had formerly held one or two minor offices. He had earned no great distinction as a scholar, but had taken a degree in honours, and was possessed of a useful amount of general knowledge, and in this he found not only constant pleasure, but also occasional profit.

The University had made herself, for better or worse, an examiner of a hundred times as many students as she could teach; her system of examinations had extended to the very limits of the British Empire, and her certificates of proficiency were coveted in every quarter of the globe.

In the examination of these students, Mr. Batchel, who had considerable experience in teaching, was annually employed. Papers from all parts of the world were to be found littered about his study, and the examination of these papers called for some weeks of strenuous labour at every year's end. As the weeks passed, he would anxiously watch the growth of a neat stack of papers in the corner of the room, which indicated the number to which marks had been assigned and reported to Cambridge. The day upon which the last of these was laid in its place was a day of satisfaction, second only to that which later on brought him a substantial cheque to remunerate him for his labours.

During this period of special effort, Mr. Batchel's servants had their share of its discomforts. The chairs and tables they wanted to dust and to arrange, were loaded with papers which they were forbidden to touch; and although they were warned against showing visitors into any room where these papers were lying, Mr. Batchel would inconsiderately lay them in every room he had. The privacy of his study, however, where the work was chiefly done, was strictly guarded, and no one was admitted there unless by Mr. Batchel himself.

Imagine his annoyance, therefore, when he returned from an evening engagement at the beginning of the month of January, and found a stranger seated in the study! Yet the annoyance was not long in subsiding. The visitor was a lady, and as she sat by the lamp, a glance

was enough to shew that she was young, and very beautiful. The interest which this young lady excited in Mr. Batchel was altogether unusual, as unusual as was the visit of such a person at such a time. His conjecture was that she had called to give him notice of a marriage, but he was really charmed by her presence, and was quite content to find her in no haste to state her errand. The manner, however, of the lady was singular, for neither by word nor movement did she show that she was conscious of Mr. Batchel's entry into the room.

He began at length with his customary formula "What can I have the pleasure of doing for you?" and when, at the sound of his voice, she turned her fine dark eyes upon him, he saw that they were wet with tears.

Mr. Batchel was now really moved. As a tear fell upon the lady's cheek, she raised her hand as if to conceal it--a brilliant sapphire sparkling in the lamp-light as she did so. And then the lady's distress, and the exquisite grace of her presence, altogether overcame him. There stole upon him a strange feeling of tenderness which he supposed to be paternal, but knew nevertheless to be indiscreet. He was a prudent man, with strict notions of propriety, so that, ostensibly with a view to giving the lady a few minutes in which to recover her composure, he quietly left the study and went into another room, to pull himself together.

Mr. Batchel, like most solitary men, had a habit of talking to himself. "It is of no use, R. B.," he said, "to pretend that you have retired on this damsel's account. If you don't take care, you'll make a fool of yourself." He took up from the table a volume of the encyclopedia in which, the day before, he had been looking up Pestalozzi, and turned over the pages in search of something to restore his equanimity. An article on Perspective proved to be the very thing. Wholly unromantic in character, its copious presentment of hard fact relieved his mind, and he was soon threading his way along paths of knowledge to which he was little accustomed. He applied his remedy with such persistence that when four or five minutes had passed, he felt sufficiently composed to return to the study. He framed, as he went, a suitable form of words with which to open the conversation, and took with him his register of Banns of Marriage, of which he thought he foresaw the need. As he opened the study-door, the book fell from his hands to the ground, so completely was he overcome by surprise, for he found the room empty. The lady had disappeared; her chair stood vacant before him.

Mr. Batchel sat down for a moment, and then rang the bell. It was answered by the boy who always attended upon him.

"When did the lady go?" asked Mr. Batchel.

The boy looked bewildered.

"The lady you showed into the study before I came."

"Please, sir, I never shown anyone into the study; I never do when you're out."

"There was a lady here," said Mr. Batchel, "when I returned."

The boy now looked incredulous.

"Did you not let someone out just now?"

"No, sir," said the boy. "I put the chain on the front door as soon as you came in."

This was conclusive. The chain upon the hall-door was an ancient and cumbrous thing, and could not be manipulated without considerable effort, and a great deal of noise. Mr. Batchel released the boy, and began to think furiously. He was not, as the reader is well aware, without some experience of the supranormal side of nature, and he knew of course that the visit of this enthralling lady had a purpose. He was beginning to know, however, that it had had an effect. He sat before his fire reproducing her image, and soon gave it up in disgust because his imagination refused to do her justice. He could recover the details of her appearance, but could combine them into nothing that would reproduce the impression she had first made upon him.

He was unable now to concentrate his attention upon the examination papers lying on his table. His mind wandered so often to the other topic that he felt himself to be in danger of marking the answers unfairly. He turned away from his work, therefore, and moved to another chair, where he sat down to read. It was the chair in which she herself had sat, and he made no attempt to pretend that he had chosen it on any other account. He had, in fact, made some discoveries about himself during the last half-hour, and he gave himself another surprise when he came to select his book. In the ordinary course of what he had supposed to be his nature, he would certainly have returned to the article on Perspective; it was lying open in the next room, and he had read no more than a tenth part of it. But instead of that, his thoughts went back to a volume he had but once opened, and that for no more than two minutes. He had received the book, by way of birthday present, early in the preceding year, from a relative who had bestowed either no consideration at all, or else a great deal of cunning, upon its selection. It was a collection of 17th century lyrics, which Mr. Batchel's single glance had sufficed to condemn. Regarding the one lyric he had read as a sort of literary freak, he had banished the book to one of the spare bedrooms, and had never seen it since. And now, after this long interval, the absurd lines which his eye had but once lighted upon, were recurring to his mind:

"Fair, sweet, and young, receive a prize
Reserved for your victorious eyes";

and so far from thinking them absurd, as he now recalled them, he went upstairs to fetch the book, in which he was soon absorbed. The lyrics no longer seemed unreasonable. He felt conscious, as he read one after another, of a side of nature that he had strangely neglected, and was obliged to admit that the men whose feelings were set forth in the various sonnets and poems had a fine gift of expression.

"Thus, whilst I look for her in vain,
Methinks I am a child again,
And of my shadow am a-chasing.
For all her graces are to me
Like apparitions that I see,
But never can come near th' embracing."

No! these men were not, as he had formerly supposed, writing with air, and he felt ashamed at having used the term "freak" at their expense.

Mr. Batchel read more of the lyrics, some of them twice, and one of them much oftener. That one he began to commit to memory, and since the household had retired to rest, to recite aloud. He had been unaware that literature contained anything so beautiful, and as he looked again at the book to recover an expression his memory had lost, a tear fell upon the page. It was a thing so extraordinary that Mr. Batchel first looked at the ceiling, but when he found that it was indeed a tear from his own eye he was immoderately pleased with himself. Had not she also shed a tear as she sat upon the same chair? The fact seemed to draw them together.

Contemplation of this sort was, however, a luxury to be enjoyed in something like moderation. Mr. Batchel soon laid down his lyric and savagely began to add up columns of marks, by way of discipline; and when he had totalled several pages of these, respect for his normal self had returned with sufficient force to take him off to bed.

The matter of his dreams, or whether he dreamed at all, has not been disclosed. He awoke, at any rate, in a calmer state of mind, and such romantic thoughts as remained were effectually dispelled by the sight of his own countenance when he began to shave. "Fancy you spouting lyrics," he said, as he dabbed the brush upon his mouth, and by the time he was ready for breakfast he pronounced himself cured.

The prosaic labours awaiting him in the study were soon forced upon his notice, and for once he did not regret it. Amongst the letters lying upon the breakfast table was one from the secretary who controlled the

system of examination. The form of the envelope was too familiar to leave him in doubt as to what it contained. It was a letter which, to a careful man like Mr. Batchel, seemed to have the nature of a reproof, inasmuch as it probably asked for information which it had already been his duty to furnish. The contents of the envelope, when he had impatiently torn it open, answered to his expectation--he was formally requested to supply the name and the marks of candidate No. 1004, and he wondered, as he ate his breakfast, how he had omitted to return them. He hunted out the paper of No. 1004 as soon as the meal was over. The candidate proved to be one Lubrietta Bodria, of whom, of course, he had never heard, and her answers had all been marked. He could not understand why they should have been made the subject of enquiry.

He took her papers in his hand, and looked at them again as he stood with his back to the fire, having lit the pipe which invariably followed his breakfast, and then he discovered something much harder to understand. The marks were not his own. In place of the usual sketchy numerals, hardly decipherable to any but himself, he saw figures which were carefully formed; and the marks assigned to the first answer, as he saw it on the uppermost sheet, were higher than the maximum number obtainable for that question.

Mr. Batchel laid down his pipe and seated himself at the table. He was greatly puzzled. As he turned over the sheets of No. 1004 he found all the other questions marked in like manner, and making a total of half as much again as the highest possible number. "Who the dickens," he said, using a meaningless, but not uncommon expression, "has been playing with this; and how came I to pass it over?" The need of the moment, however, was to furnish the proper marks to the secretary at Cambridge, and Mr. Batchel proceeded to read No. 1004 right through.

He soon found that he had read it all before, and the matter began to bristle with queries. It proved, in fact, to be a paper over which he had spent some time, and for a singularly interesting reason. He had learned from a friend in the Indian Civil Service that an exaggerated value was often placed by ambitious Indians and Cingalese upon a European education, and that many aspiring young men declined to take a wife who had not passed this very examination. It was to Mr. Batchel a disquieting reflection that his blue pencil was not only marking mistakes, but might at the same time be cancelling matrimonial engagements, and his friend's communication had made him scrupulously careful in examining the work of young ladies in Oriental Schools. The matter had occurred to him at once as he had examined the answers of Lubrietta Rodria. He perfectly remembered the question upon which her success depended. A problem in logic had been answered by a rambling and worthless argument, to which, somehow, the right conclusion was appended: the conclusion might be a happy guess, or it might have been secured by less honest means, but Mr. Batchel, following his usual practice, gave no marks for it. It was not here that he found any cause

for hesitation, but when he came to the end of the paper and found that the candidate had only just failed, he had turned back to the critical question, imagined an eligible bachelor awaiting the result of the examination, and then, after a period of vacillation, had hastily put the symbol of failure upon the paper lest he should be tempted to bring his own charity to the rescue of the candidate's logic, and unfairly add the three marks which would suffice to pass her.

As he now read the answer for the second time, the same pitiful thought troubled him, and this time more than before; for over the edge of the paper of No. 1004 there persistently arose the image of the young lady with the sapphire ring. It directed the current of his thoughts. Suppose that Lubrietta Rodria were anything like that! and what if the arguments of No. 1004 were worthless! Young ladies were notoriously weak in argument, and as strong in conclusions! and after all, the conclusion was correct, and ought not a correct conclusion to have its marks? There followed much more to the same purpose, and in the end Mr. Batchel stultified himself by adding the necessary three marks, and passing the candidate.

"This comes precious near to being a job," he remarked, as he entered the marks upon the form and sealed it in the envelope, "but No. 1004 must pass, this time." He enclosed in the envelope a request to know why the marks had been asked for, since they had certainly been returned in their proper place. A brief official reply informed him next day that the marks he had returned exceeded the maximum, and must, therefore, have been wrongly entered.

"This," said Mr. Batchel, "is a curious coincidence."

Curious as it certainly was, it was less curious than what immediately followed. It was Mr. Batchel's practice to avoid any delay in returning these official papers, and he went out, there and then, to post his envelope. The Post Office was no more than a hundred yards from his door, and in three minutes he was in his study again. The first object that met his eye there was a beautiful sapphire ring lying upon the papers of No. 1004, which had remained upon the table.

Mr. Batchel at once recognised the ring. "I knew it was precious near a job," he said, "but I didn't know that it was as near as this."

He took up the ring and examined it. It looked like a ring of great value; the stone was large and brilliant, and the setting was of fine workmanship. "Now what on earth," said Mr. Batchel, "am I to do with this?"

The nearest jeweller to Stoneground was a competent and experienced tradesman of the old school. He was a member of the local Natural History Society, and in that capacity Mr. Batchel had made intimate

acquaintance with him. To this jeweller, therefore, he carried the ring, and asked him what he thought of it.

"I'll give you forty pounds for it," said the jeweller.

Mr. Batchel replied that the ring was not his. "What about the make of it?" he asked. "Is it English?"

The jeweller replied that it was unmistakably Indian.

"You are sure?" said Mr. Batchel.

"Certain," said the jeweller. "Major Ackroyd brought home one like it, all but the stone, from Puna; I repaired it for him last year."

The information was enough, if not more than enough, for Mr. Batchel. He begged a suitable case from his friend the jeweller, and within an hour had posted the ring to Miss Lubrietta Rodria at the European College in Puna. At the same time he wrote to the Principal the letter whose answer is embodied in the preface to this narrative.

Having done this, Mr. Batchel felt more at ease. He had given Lubrietta Rodria what he amiably called the benefit of the doubt, but it should never be said that he had been bribed.

The rest of his papers he marked with fierce justice. A great deal of the work, in his zeal, he did twice over, but his conscience amply requited him for the superfluous labour. The last paper was marked within a day of the allotted time, Mr. Batchel shortly afterwards received his cheque, and was glad to think that the whole matter was at an end.

* * * * *

That Lubrietta had been absent from India whilst her relatives and attendants were trying to restore her to consciousness, he had good reason to know. His friends, for the most part, took a very narrow view of human nature and its possibilities, so that he kept his experience, for a long time, to himself; there were personal reasons for not discussing the incident. The reader has been already told upon what understanding it is recorded here.

There remains, however, an episode which Mr. Batchel all but managed to suppress. Upon the one occasion when he allowed himself to speak of this matter, he was being pressed for a description of the sapphire ring, and was not very successful in his attempt to describe it. There was no reason, of course, why this should lay his good faith under suspicion. Few of us could pass an examination upon objects with which we are supposed to be familiar, or say which of our tables have three

legs, and which four.

One of Mr. Batchel's auditors, however, took a captious view of the matter, and brusquely remarked, in imitation of a more famous sceptic, "I don't believe there's no sich a thing."

Mr. Batchel, of course, recognised the phrase, and it was his eagerness to establish his credit that committed him at this point to a last disclosure about Lubrietta. He drew a sapphire ring from his pocket, handed it to the incredulous auditor, and addressed him in the manner of Mrs. Gamp.

"What! you bage creetur, have I had this ring three year or more to be told there ain't no sech a thing. Go along with you."

"But I thought the ring was sent back," said more than one.

"How did you come by it?" said all the others.

Mr. Batchel thereupon admitted that he had closed his story prematurely. About six weeks after the return of the ring to Puna he had found it once again upon his table, returned through the post. Enclosed in the package was a note which Mr. Batchel, being now committed to this part of the story, also passed round for inspection. It ran as follows:--

"Accept the ring, dear one, and wear it for my sake. Fail not to think sometimes of her whom you have made happy.--L. R."

"What on earth am I to do with this?" Mr. Batchel had asked himself again. And this time he had answered the question, after the briefest possible delay, by slipping the ring upon his fourth finger.

The book of Lyrics remained downstairs amongst the books in constant use. Mr. Batchel can repeat at least half of the collection from memory.

He knows well enough that such terms as "dear one" are addressed to bald gentlemen only in a Pickwickian sense, but even with that sense the letter gives him pleasure.

He admits that he thinks very often of "her whom he has made happy," but that he cannot exclude from his thoughts at these times an ungenerous regret. It is that he has also made happy a nameless Oriental gentleman whom he presumptuously calls "the other fellow."



William Wilson

Project Gutenberg's *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, Vol. 2* by Edgar Allan Poe

What say of it? what say of CONSCIENCE grim,
That spectre in my path?

Chamberlayne's Pharronida.

LET me call myself, for the present, William Wilson. The fair page now lying before me need not be sullied with my real appellation. This has been already too much an object for the scorn--for the horror--for the detestation of my race. To the uttermost regions of the globe have not the indignant winds bruited its unparalleled infamy? Oh, outcast of all outcasts most abandoned!--to the earth art thou not forever dead? to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden aspirations?--and a cloud, dense, dismal, and limitless, does it not hang eternally between thy hopes and heaven?

I would not, if I could, here or to-day, embody a record of my later years of unspeakable misery, and unpardonable crime. This epoch--these later years--took unto themselves a sudden elevation in turpitude, whose origin alone it is my present purpose to assign. Men usually grow base by degrees. From me, in an instant, all virtue dropped bodily as a mantle. From comparatively trivial wickedness I passed, with the stride of a giant, into more than the enormities of an Elah-Gabalus. What chance--what one event brought this evil thing to pass, bear with me while I relate. Death approaches; and the shadow which foreruns him has thrown a softening influence over my spirit. I long, in passing through the dim valley, for the sympathy--I had nearly said for the pity--of

my fellow men. I would fain have them believe that I have been, in some measure, the slave of circumstances beyond human control. I would wish them to seek out for me, in the details I am about to give, some little oasis of fatality amid a wilderness of error. I would have them allow--what they cannot refrain from allowing--that, although temptation may have erewhile existed as great, man was never thus, at least, tempted before--certainly, never thus fell. And is it therefore that he has never thus suffered? Have I not indeed been living in a dream? And am I not now dying a victim to the horror and the mystery of the wildest of all sublunary visions?

I am the descendant of a race whose imaginative and easily excitable temperament has at all times rendered them remarkable; and, in my earliest infancy, I gave evidence of having fully inherited the family character. As I advanced in years it was more strongly developed; becoming, for many reasons, a cause of serious disquietude to my friends, and of positive injury to myself. I grew self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions. Weak-minded, and beset with constitutional infirmities akin to my own, my parents could do but little to check the evil propensities which distinguished me. Some feeble and ill-directed efforts resulted in complete failure on their part, and, of course, in total triumph on mine. Thenceforward my voice was a household law; and at an age when few children have abandoned their leading-strings, I was left to the guidance of my own will, and became, in all but name, the master of my own actions.

My earliest recollections of a school-life, are connected with a large, rambling, Elizabethan house, in a misty-looking village of England, where were a vast number of gigantic and gnarled trees, and where all the houses were excessively ancient. In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-soothing place, that venerable old town. At this moment, in fancy, I feel the refreshing chilliness of its deeply-shadowed avenues, inhale the fragrance of its thousand shrubberies, and thrill anew with undefinable delight, at the deep hollow note of the church-bell, breaking, each hour, with sullen and sudden roar, upon the stillness of the dusky atmosphere in which the fretted Gothic steeple lay imbedded and asleep.

It gives me, perhaps, as much of pleasure as I can now in any manner experience, to dwell upon minute recollections of the school and its concerns. Steeped in misery as I am--misery, alas! only too real--I shall be pardoned for seeking relief, however slight and temporary, in the weakness of a few rambling details. These, moreover, utterly trivial, and even ridiculous in themselves, assume, to my fancy, adventitious importance, as connected with a period and a locality when and where I recognise the first ambiguous monitions of the destiny which afterwards so fully overshadowed me. Let me then remember.

The house, I have said, was old and irregular. The grounds were extensive, and a high and solid brick wall, topped with a bed of mortar and broken glass, encompassed the whole. This prison-like rampart formed the limit of our domain; beyond it we saw but thrice a week--once every Saturday afternoon, when, attended by two ushers, we were permitted to take brief walks in a body through some of the neighbouring fields--and twice during Sunday, when we were paraded in the same formal manner to the morning and evening service in the one church of the village. Of this church the principal of our school was pastor. With how deep a spirit of wonder and perplexity was I wont to regard him from our remote pew in the gallery, as, with step solemn and slow, he ascended the pulpit! This reverend man, with countenance so demurely benign, with robes so glossy and so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid and so vast,---could this be he who, of late, with sour visage, and in snuffy habiliments, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian laws of the academy? Oh, gigantic paradox, too utterly monstrous for solution!

At an angle of the ponderous wall frowned a more ponderous gate. It was riveted and studded with iron bolts, and surmounted with jagged iron spikes. What impressions of deep awe did it inspire! It was never opened save for the three periodical egressions and ingressions already mentioned; then, in every creak of its mighty hinges, we found a plenitude of mystery--a world of matter for solemn remark, or for more solemn meditation.

The extensive enclosure was irregular in form, having many capacious recesses. Of these, three or four of the largest constituted the play-ground. It was level, and covered with fine hard gravel. I well remember it had no trees, nor benches, nor anything similar within it. Of course it was in the rear of the house. In front lay a small parterre, planted with box and other shrubs; but through this sacred division we passed only upon rare occasions indeed--such as a first advent to school or final departure thence, or perhaps, when a parent or friend having called for us, we joyfully took our way home for the Christmas or Midsummer holy-days.

But the house!--how quaint an old building was this!--to me how veritably a palace of enchantment! There was really no end to its windings--to its incomprehensible subdivisions. It was difficult, at any given time, to say with certainty upon which of its two stories one happened to be. From each room to every other there were sure to be found three or four steps either in ascent or descent. Then the lateral branches were innumerable--inconceivable--and so returning in upon themselves, that our most exact ideas in regard to the whole mansion were not very far different from those with which we pondered upon infinity. During the five years of my residence here, I was never able to ascertain with precision, in what remote locality lay the little sleeping apartment assigned to myself and some eighteen or twenty other

scholars.

The school-room was the largest in the house--I could not help thinking, in the world. It was very long, narrow, and dismally low, with pointed Gothic windows and a ceiling of oak. In a remote and terror-inspiring angle was a square enclosure of eight or ten feet, comprising the sanctum, "during hours," of our principal, the Reverend Dr. Bransby. It was a solid structure, with massy door, sooner than open which in the absence of the "Dominic," we would all have willingly perished by the *peine forte et dure*. In other angles were two other similar boxes, far less revered, indeed, but still greatly matters of awe. One of these was the pulpit of the "classical" usher, one of the "English and mathematical." Interspersed about the room, crossing and recrossing in endless irregularity, were innumerable benches and desks, black, ancient, and time-worn, piled desperately with much-bethumbed books, and so bespattered with initial letters, names at full length, grotesque figures, and other multiplied efforts of the knife, as to have entirely lost what little of original form might have been their portion in days long departed. A huge bucket with water stood at one extremity of the room, and a clock of stupendous dimensions at the other.

Encompassed by the massy walls of this venerable academy, I passed, yet not in tedium or disgust, the years of the third lustrum of my life. The teeming brain of childhood requires no external world of incident to occupy or amuse it; and the apparently dismal monotony of a school was replete with more intense excitement than my riper youth has derived from luxury, or my full manhood from crime. Yet I must believe that my first mental development had in it much of the uncommon--even much of the outre. Upon mankind at large the events of very early existence rarely leave in mature age any definite impression. All is gray shadow--a weak and irregular remembrance--an indistinct regathering of feeble pleasures and phantasmagoric pains. With me this is not so. In childhood I must have felt with the energy of a man what I now find stamped upon memory in lines as vivid, as deep, and as durable as the exergues of the Carthaginian medals.

Yet in fact--in the fact of the world's view--how little was there to remember! The morning's awakening, the nightly summons to bed; the connings, the recitations; the periodical half-holidays, and perambulations; the play-ground, with its broils, its pastimes, its intrigues;--these, by a mental sorcery long forgotten, were made to involve a wilderness of sensation, a world of rich incident, an universe of varied emotion, of excitement the most passionate and spirit-stirring. "Oh, le bon temps, que ce siecle de fer!"

In truth, the ardor, the enthusiasm, and the imperiousness of my disposition, soon rendered me a marked character among my schoolmates, and by slow, but natural gradations, gave me an ascendancy over all not greatly older than myself;--over all with a single exception.

This exception was found in the person of a scholar, who, although no relation, bore the same Christian and surname as myself;--a circumstance, in fact, little remarkable; for, notwithstanding a noble descent, mine was one of those everyday appellations which seem, by prescriptive right, to have been, time out of mind, the common property of the mob. In this narrative I have therefore designated myself as William Wilson,--a fictitious title not very dissimilar to the real. My namesake alone, of those who in school phraseology constituted "our set," presumed to compete with me in the studies of the class--in the sports and broils of the play-ground--to refuse implicit belief in my assertions, and submission to my will--indeed, to interfere with my arbitrary dictation in any respect whatsoever. If there is on earth a supreme and unqualified despotism, it is the despotism of a master mind in boyhood over the less energetic spirits of its companions.

Wilson's rebellion was to me a source of the greatest embarrassment;--the more so as, in spite of the bravado with which in public I made a point of treating him and his pretensions, I secretly felt that I feared him, and could not help thinking the equality which he maintained so easily with myself, a proof of his true superiority; since not to be overcome cost me a perpetual struggle. Yet this superiority--even this equality--was in truth acknowledged by no one but myself; our associates, by some unaccountable blindness, seemed not even to suspect it. Indeed, his competition, his resistance, and especially his impertinent and dogged interference with my purposes, were not more pointed than private. He appeared to be destitute alike of the ambition which urged, and of the passionate energy of mind which enabled me to excel. In his rivalry he might have been supposed actuated solely by a whimsical desire to thwart, astonish, or mortify myself; although there were times when I could not help observing, with a feeling made up of wonder, abasement, and pique, that he mingled with his injuries, his insults, or his contradictions, a certain most inappropriate, and assuredly most unwelcome affectionateness of manner. I could only conceive this singular behavior to arise from a consummate self-conceit assuming the vulgar airs of patronage and protection.

Perhaps it was this latter trait in Wilson's conduct, conjoined with our identity of name, and the mere accident of our having entered the school upon the same day, which set afloat the notion that we were brothers, among the senior classes in the academy. These do not usually inquire with much strictness into the affairs of their juniors. I have before said, or should have said, that Wilson was not, in the most remote degree, connected with my family. But assuredly if we had been brothers we must have been twins; for, after leaving Dr. Bransby's, I casually learned that my namesake was born on the nineteenth of January, 1813--and this is a somewhat remarkable coincidence; for the day is precisely that of my own nativity.

It may seem strange that in spite of the continual anxiety occasioned me

by the rivalry of Wilson, and his intolerable spirit of contradiction, I could not bring myself to hate him altogether. We had, to be sure, nearly every day a quarrel in which, yielding me publicly the palm of victory, he, in some manner, contrived to make me feel that it was he who had deserved it; yet a sense of pride on my part, and a veritable dignity on his own, kept us always upon what are called "speaking terms," while there were many points of strong congeniality in our tempers, operating to awake me in a sentiment which our position alone, perhaps, prevented from ripening into friendship. It is difficult, indeed, to define, or even to describe, my real feelings towards him. They formed a motley and heterogeneous admixture;--some petulant animosity, which was not yet hatred, some esteem, more respect, much fear, with a world of uneasy curiosity. To the moralist it will be unnecessary to say, in addition, that Wilson and myself were the most inseparable of companions.

It was no doubt the anomalous state of affairs existing between us, which turned all my attacks upon him, (and they were many, either open or covert) into the channel of banter or practical joke (giving pain while assuming the aspect of mere fun) rather than into a more serious and determined hostility. But my endeavours on this head were by no means uniformly successful, even when my plans were the most wittily concocted; for my namesake had much about him, in character, of that unassuming and quiet austerity which, while enjoying the poignancy of its own jokes, has no heel of Achilles in itself, and absolutely refuses to be laughed at. I could find, indeed, but one vulnerable point, and that, lying in a personal peculiarity, arising, perhaps, from constitutional disease, would have been spared by any antagonist less at his wit's end than myself;--my rival had a weakness in the faucal or guttural organs, which precluded him from raising his voice at any time above a very low whisper. Of this defect I did not fail to take what poor advantage lay in my power.

Wilson's retaliations in kind were many; and there was one form of his practical wit that disturbed me beyond measure. How his sagacity first discovered at all that so petty a thing would vex me, is a question I never could solve; but, having discovered, he habitually practised the annoyance. I had always felt aversion to my uncourtly patronymic, and its very common, if not plebeian praenomen. The words were venom in my ears; and when, upon the day of my arrival, a second William Wilson came also to the academy, I felt angry with him for bearing the name, and doubly disgusted with the name because a stranger bore it, who would be the cause of its twofold repetition, who would be constantly in my presence, and whose concerns, in the ordinary routine of the school business, must inevitably, on account of the detestable coincidence, be often confounded with my own.

The feeling of vexation thus engendered grew stronger with every circumstance tending to show resemblance, moral or physical, between my

rival and myself. I had not then discovered the remarkable fact that we were of the same age; but I saw that we were of the same height, and I perceived that we were even singularly alike in general contour of person and outline of feature. I was galled, too, by the rumor touching a relationship, which had grown current in the upper forms. In a word, nothing could more seriously disturb me, (although I scrupulously concealed such disturbance,) than any allusion to a similarity of mind, person, or condition existing between us. But, in truth, I had no reason to believe that (with the exception of the matter of relationship, and in the case of Wilson himself,) this similarity had ever been made a subject of comment, or even observed at all by our schoolfellows. That he observed it in all its bearings, and as fixedly as I, was apparent; but that he could discover in such circumstances so fruitful a field of annoyance, can only be attributed, as I said before, to his more than ordinary penetration.

His cue, which was to perfect an imitation of myself, lay both in words and in actions; and most admirably did he play his part. My dress it was an easy matter to copy; my gait and general manner were, without difficulty, appropriated; in spite of his constitutional defect, even my voice did not escape him. My louder tones were, of course, unattempted, but then the key, it was identical; and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own.

How greatly this most exquisite portraiture harassed me, (for it could not justly be termed a caricature,) I will not now venture to describe. I had but one consolation--in the fact that the imitation, apparently, was noticed by myself alone, and that I had to endure only the knowing and strangely sarcastic smiles of my namesake himself. Satisfied with having produced in my bosom the intended effect, he seemed to chuckle in secret over the sting he had inflicted, and was characteristically disregardful of the public applause which the success of his witty endeavours might have so easily elicited. That the school, indeed, did not feel his design, perceive its accomplishment, and participate in his sneer, was, for many anxious months, a riddle I could not resolve. Perhaps the gradation of his copy rendered it not so readily perceptible; or, more possibly, I owed my security to the master air of the copyist, who, disdaining the letter, (which in a painting is all the obtuse can see,) gave but the full spirit of his original for my individual contemplation and chagrin.

I have already more than once spoken of the disgusting air of patronage which he assumed toward me, and of his frequent officious interference with my will. This interference often took the ungracious character of advice; advice not openly given, but hinted or insinuated. I received it with a repugnance which gained strength as I grew in years. Yet, at this distant day, let me do him the simple justice to acknowledge that I can recall no occasion when the suggestions of my rival were on the side of those errors or follies so usual to his immature age and seeming

inexperience; that his moral sense, at least, if not his general talents and worldly wisdom, was far keener than my own; and that I might, to-day, have been a better, and thus a happier man, had I less frequently rejected the counsels embodied in those meaning whispers which I then but too cordially hated and too bitterly despised.

As it was, I at length grew restive in the extreme under his distasteful supervision, and daily resented more and more openly what I considered his intolerable arrogance. I have said that, in the first years of our connexion as schoolmates, my feelings in regard to him might have been easily ripened into friendship: but, in the latter months of my residence at the academy, although the intrusion of his ordinary manner had, beyond doubt, in some measure, abated, my sentiments, in nearly similar proportion, partook very much of positive hatred. Upon one occasion he saw this, I think, and afterwards avoided, or made a show of avoiding me.

It was about the same period, if I remember aright, that, in an altercation of violence with him, in which he was more than usually thrown off his guard, and spoke and acted with an openness of demeanor rather foreign to his nature, I discovered, or fancied I discovered, in his accent, his air, and general appearance, a something which first startled, and then deeply interested me, by bringing to mind dim visions of my earliest infancy--wild, confused and thronging memories of a time when memory herself was yet unborn. I cannot better describe the sensation which oppressed me than by saying that I could with difficulty shake off the belief of my having been acquainted with the being who stood before me, at some epoch very long ago--some point of the past even infinitely remote. The delusion, however, faded rapidly as it came; and I mention it at all but to define the day of the last conversation I there held with my singular namesake.

The huge old house, with its countless subdivisions, had several large chambers communicating with each other, where slept the greater number of the students. There were, however, (as must necessarily happen in a building so awkwardly planned,) many little nooks or recesses, the odds and ends of the structure; and these the economic ingenuity of Dr. Bransby had also fitted up as dormitories; although, being the merest closets, they were capable of accommodating but a single individual. One of these small apartments was occupied by Wilson.

One night, about the close of my fifth year at the school, and immediately after the altercation just mentioned, finding every one wrapped in sleep, I arose from bed, and, lamp in hand, stole through a wilderness of narrow passages from my own bedroom to that of my rival. I had long been plotting one of those ill-natured pieces of practical wit at his expense in which I had hitherto been so uniformly unsuccessful. It was my intention, now, to put my scheme in operation, and I resolved to make him feel the whole extent of the malice with which I was imbued.

Having reached his closet, I noiselessly entered, leaving the lamp, with a shade over it, on the outside. I advanced a step, and listened to the sound of his tranquil breathing. Assured of his being asleep, I returned, took the light, and with it again approached the bed. Close curtains were around it, which, in the prosecution of my plan, I slowly and quietly withdrew, when the bright rays fell vividly upon the sleeper, and my eyes, at the same moment, upon his countenance. I looked;--and a numbness, an iciness of feeling instantly pervaded my frame. My breast heaved, my knees tottered, my whole spirit became possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror. Gasping for breath, I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face. Were these--these the lineaments of William Wilson? I saw, indeed, that they were his, but I shook as if with a fit of the ague in fancying they were not. What was there about them to confound me in this manner? I gazed;--while my brain reeled with a multitude of incoherent thoughts. Not thus he appeared--assuredly not thus--in the vivacity of his waking hours. The same name! the same contour of person! the same day of arrival at the academy! And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner! Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that what I now saw was the result, merely, of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation? Awe-stricken, and with a creeping shudder, I extinguished the lamp, passed silently from the chamber, and left, at once, the halls of that old academy, never to enter them again.

After a lapse of some months, spent at home in mere idleness, I found myself a student at Eton. The brief interval had been sufficient to enfeeble my remembrance of the events at Dr. Bransby's, or at least to effect a material change in the nature of the feelings with which I remembered them. The truth--the tragedy--of the drama was no more. I could now find room to doubt the evidence of my senses; and seldom called up the subject at all but with wonder at extent of human credulity, and a smile at the vivid force of the imagination which I hereditarily possessed. Neither was this species of scepticism likely to be diminished by the character of the life I led at Eton. The vortex of thoughtless folly into which I there so immediately and so recklessly plunged, washed away all but the froth of my past hours, engulfed at once every solid or serious impression, and left to memory only the veriest levities of a former existence.

I do not wish, however, to trace the course of my miserable profligacy here--a profligacy which set at defiance the laws, while it eluded the vigilance of the institution. Three years of folly, passed without profit, had but given me rooted habits of vice, and added, in a somewhat unusual degree, to my bodily stature, when, after a week of soulless dissipation, I invited a small party of the most dissolute students to a secret carousal in my chambers. We met at a late hour of the night; for our debaucheries were to be faithfully protracted until morning. The wine flowed freely, and there were not wanting other and perhaps more

dangerous seductions; so that the gray dawn had already faintly appeared in the east, while our delirious extravagance was at its height. Madly flushed with cards and intoxication, I was in the act of insisting upon a toast of more than wonted profanity, when my attention was suddenly diverted by the violent, although partial unclosing of the door of the apartment, and by the eager voice of a servant from without. He said that some person, apparently in great haste, demanded to speak with me in the hall.

Wildly excited with wine, the unexpected interruption rather delighted than surprised me. I staggered forward at once, and a few steps brought me to the vestibule of the building. In this low and small room there hung no lamp; and now no light at all was admitted, save that of the exceedingly feeble dawn which made its way through the semi-circular window. As I put my foot over the threshold, I became aware of the figure of a youth about my own height, and habited in a white kerseymere morning frock, cut in the novel fashion of the one I myself wore at the moment. This the faint light enabled me to perceive; but the features of his face I could not distinguish. Upon my entering he strode hurriedly up to me, and, seizing me by the arm with a gesture of petulant impatience, whispered the words "William Wilson!" in my ear.

I grew perfectly sober in an instant. There was that in the manner of the stranger, and in the tremulous shake of his uplifted finger, as he held it between my eyes and the light, which filled me with unqualified amazement; but it was not this which had so violently moved me. It was the pregnancy of solemn admonition in the singular, low, hissing utterance; and, above all, it was the character, the tone, the key, of those few, simple, and familiar, yet whispered syllables, which came with a thousand thronging memories of bygone days, and struck upon my soul with the shock of a galvanic battery. Ere I could recover the use of my senses he was gone.

Although this event failed not of a vivid effect upon my disordered imagination, yet was it evanescent as vivid. For some weeks, indeed, I busied myself in earnest inquiry, or was wrapped in a cloud of morbid speculation. I did not pretend to disguise from my perception the identity of the singular individual who thus perseveringly interfered with my affairs, and harassed me with his insinuated counsel. But who and what was this Wilson?--and whence came he?--and what were his purposes? Upon neither of these points could I be satisfied; merely ascertaining, in regard to him, that a sudden accident in his family had caused his removal from Dr. Bransby's academy on the afternoon of the day in which I myself had eloped. But in a brief period I ceased to think upon the subject; my attention being all absorbed in a contemplated departure for Oxford. Thither I soon went; the uncalculating vanity of my parents furnishing me with an outfit and annual establishment, which would enable me to indulge at will in the luxury already so dear to my heart,--to vie in profuseness of

expenditure with the haughtiest heirs of the wealthiest earldoms in Great Britain.

Excited by such appliances to vice, my constitutional temperament broke forth with redoubled ardor, and I spurned even the common restraints of decency in the mad infatuation of my revels. But it were absurd to pause in the detail of my extravagance. Let it suffice, that among spendthrifts I out-Heroded Herod, and that, giving name to a multitude of novel follies, I added no brief appendix to the long catalogue of vices then usual in the most dissolute university of Europe.

It could hardly be credited, however, that I had, even here, so utterly fallen from the gentlemanly estate, as to seek acquaintance with the vilest arts of the gambler by profession, and, having become an adept in his despicable science, to practise it habitually as a means of increasing my already enormous income at the expense of the weak-minded among my fellow-collegians. Such, nevertheless, was the fact. And the very enormity of this offence against all manly and honourable sentiment proved, beyond doubt, the main if not the sole reason of the impunity with which it was committed. Who, indeed, among my most abandoned associates, would not rather have disputed the clearest evidence of his senses, than have suspected of such courses, the gay, the frank, the generous William Wilson--the noblest and most liberal commoner at Oxford--him whose follies (said his parasites) were but the follies of youth and unbridled fancy--whose errors but inimitable whim--whose darkest vice but a careless and dashing extravagance?

I had been now two years successfully busied in this way, when there came to the university a young parvenu nobleman, Glendinning--rich, said report, as Herodes Atticus--his riches, too, as easily acquired. I soon found him of weak intellect, and, of course, marked him as a fitting subject for my skill. I frequently engaged him in play, and contrived, with the gambler's usual art, to let him win considerable sums, the more effectually to entangle him in my snares. At length, my schemes being ripe, I met him (with the full intention that this meeting should be final and decisive) at the chambers of a fellow-commoner, (Mr. Preston,) equally intimate with both, but who, to do him Justice, entertained not even a remote suspicion of my design. To give to this a better colouring, I had contrived to have assembled a party of some eight or ten, and was solicitously careful that the introduction of cards should appear accidental, and originate in the proposal of my contemplated dupe himself. To be brief upon a vile topic, none of the low finesse was omitted, so customary upon similar occasions that it is a just matter for wonder how any are still found so besotted as to fall its victim.

We had protracted our sitting far into the night, and I had at length effected the manoeuvre of getting Glendinning as my sole antagonist. The game, too, was my favorite *ecarte*! The rest of the company, interested in the extent of our play, had abandoned their own cards, and were

standing around us as spectators. The parvenu, who had been induced by my artifices in the early part of the evening, to drink deeply, now shuffled, dealt, or played, with a wild nervousness of manner for which his intoxication, I thought, might partially, but could not altogether account. In a very short period he had become my debtor to a large amount, when, having taken a long draught of port, he did precisely what I had been coolly anticipating--he proposed to double our already extravagant stakes. With a well-feigned show of reluctance, and not until after my repeated refusal had seduced him into some angry words which gave a color of pique to my compliance, did I finally comply. The result, of course, did but prove how entirely the prey was in my toils; in less than an hour he had quadrupled his debt. For some time his countenance had been losing the florid tinge lent it by the wine; but now, to my astonishment, I perceived that it had grown to a pallor truly fearful. I say to my astonishment. Glendinning had been represented to my eager inquiries as immeasurably wealthy; and the sums which he had as yet lost, although in themselves vast, could not, I supposed, very seriously annoy, much less so violently affect him. That he was overcome by the wine just swallowed, was the idea which most readily presented itself; and, rather with a view to the preservation of my own character in the eyes of my associates, than from any less interested motive, I was about to insist, peremptorily, upon a discontinuance of the play, when some expressions at my elbow from among the company, and an ejaculation evincing utter despair on the part of Glendinning, gave me to understand that I had effected his total ruin under circumstances which, rendering him an object for the pity of all, should have protected him from the ill offices even of a fiend.

What now might have been my conduct it is difficult to say. The pitiable condition of my dupe had thrown an air of embarrassed gloom over all; and, for some moments, a profound silence was maintained, during which I could not help feeling my cheeks tingle with the many burning glances of scorn or reproach cast upon me by the less abandoned of the party. I will even own that an intolerable weight of anxiety was for a brief instant lifted from my bosom by the sudden and extraordinary interruption which ensued. The wide, heavy folding doors of the apartment were all at once thrown open, to their full extent, with a vigorous and rushing impetuosity that extinguished, as if by magic, every candle in the room. Their light, in dying, enabled us just to perceive that a stranger had entered, about my own height, and closely muffled in a cloak. The darkness, however, was now total; and we could only feel that he was standing in our midst. Before any one of us could recover from the extreme astonishment into which this rudeness had thrown all, we heard the voice of the intruder.

“Gentlemen,” he said, in a low, distinct, and never-to-be-forgotten whisper which thrilled to the very marrow of my bones, “Gentlemen, I make no apology for this behaviour, because in thus behaving, I am but fulfilling a duty. You are, beyond doubt, uninformed of the true

character of the person who has to-night won at *ecarte* a large sum of money from Lord Glendinning. I will therefore put you upon an expeditious and decisive plan of obtaining this very necessary information. Please to examine, at your leisure, the inner linings of the cuff of his left sleeve, and the several little packages which may be found in the somewhat capacious pockets of his embroidered morning wrapper.”

While he spoke, so profound was the stillness that one might have heard a pin drop upon the floor. In ceasing, he departed at once, and as abruptly as he had entered. Can I--shall I describe my sensations?--must I say that I felt all the horrors of the damned? Most assuredly I had little time given for reflection. Many hands roughly seized me upon the spot, and lights were immediately reprocured. A search ensued. In the lining of my sleeve were found all the court cards essential in *ecarte*, and, in the pockets of my wrapper, a number of packs, facsimiles of those used at our sittings, with the single exception that mine were of the species called, technically, *arrondees*; the honours being slightly convex at the ends, the lower cards slightly convex at the sides. In this disposition, the dupe who cuts, as customary, at the length of the pack, will invariably find that he cuts his antagonist an honor; while the gambler, cutting at the breadth, will, as certainly, cut nothing for his victim which may count in the records of the game.

Any burst of indignation upon this discovery would have affected me less than the silent contempt, or the sarcastic composure, with which it was received.

“Mr. Wilson,” said our host, stooping to remove from beneath his feet an exceedingly luxurious cloak of rare furs, “Mr. Wilson, this is your property.” (The weather was cold; and, upon quitting my own room, I had thrown a cloak over my dressing wrapper, putting it off upon reaching the scene of play.) “I presume it is supererogatory to seek here (eyeing the folds of the garment with a bitter smile) for any farther evidence of your skill. Indeed, we have had enough. You will see the necessity, I hope, of quitting Oxford--at all events, of quitting instantly my chambers.”

Abased, humbled to the dust as I then was, it is probable that I should have resented this galling language by immediate personal violence, had not my whole attention been at the moment arrested by a fact of the most startling character. The cloak which I had worn was of a rare description of fur; how rare, how extravagantly costly, I shall not venture to say. Its fashion, too, was of my own fantastic invention; for I was fastidious to an absurd degree of coxcombry, in matters of this frivolous nature. When, therefore, Mr. Preston reached me that which he had picked up upon the floor, and near the folding doors of the apartment, it was with an astonishment nearly bordering upon terror, that I perceived my own already hanging on my arm, (where I had no doubt

unwittingly placed it,) and that the one presented me was but its exact counterpart in every, in even the minutest possible particular. The singular being who had so disastrously exposed me, had been muffled, I remembered, in a cloak; and none had been worn at all by any of the members of our party with the exception of myself. Retaining some presence of mind, I took the one offered me by Preston; placed it, unnoticed, over my own; left the apartment with a resolute scowl of defiance; and, next morning ere dawn of day, commenced a hurried journey from Oxford to the continent, in a perfect agony of horror and of shame.

I fled in vain. My evil destiny pursued me as if in exultation, and proved, indeed, that the exercise of its mysterious dominion had as yet only begun. Scarcely had I set foot in Paris ere I had fresh evidence of the detestable interest taken by this Wilson in my concerns. Years flew, while I experienced no relief. Villain!--at Rome, with how untimely, yet with how spectral an officiousness, stepped he in between me and my ambition! At Vienna, too--at Berlin--and at Moscow! Where, in truth, had I not bitter cause to curse him within my heart? From his inscrutable tyranny did I at length flee, panic-stricken, as from a pestilence; and to the very ends of the earth I fled in vain.

And again, and again, in secret communion with my own spirit, would I demand the questions "Who is he?--whence came he?--and what are his objects?" But no answer was there found. And then I scrutinized, with a minute scrutiny, the forms, and the methods, and the leading traits of his impertinent supervision. But even here there was very little upon which to base a conjecture. It was noticeable, indeed, that, in no one of the multiplied instances in which he had of late crossed my path, had he so crossed it except to frustrate those schemes, or to disturb those actions, which, if fully carried out, might have resulted in bitter mischief. Poor justification this, in truth, for an authority so imperiously assumed! Poor indemnity for natural rights of self-agency so pertinaciously, so insultingly denied!

I had also been forced to notice that my tormentor, for a very long period of time, (while scrupulously and with miraculous dexterity maintaining his whim of an identity of apparel with myself,) had so contrived it, in the execution of his varied interference with my will, that I saw not, at any moment, the features of his face. Be Wilson what he might, this, at least, was but the veriest of affectation, or of folly. Could he, for an instant, have supposed that, in my admonisher at Eton--in the destroyer of my honor at Oxford,--in him who thwarted my ambition at Rome, my revenge at Paris, my passionate love at Naples, or what he falsely termed my avarice in Egypt,--that in this, my arch-enemy and evil genius, could fail to recognise the William Wilson of my school boy days,--the namesake, the companion, the rival,--the hated and dreaded rival at Dr. Bransby's? Impossible!--But let me hasten to the last eventful scene of the drama.

Thus far I had succumbed supinely to this imperious domination. The sentiment of deep awe with which I habitually regarded the elevated character, the majestic wisdom, the apparent omnipresence and omnipotence of Wilson, added to a feeling of even terror, with which certain other traits in his nature and assumptions inspired me, had operated, hitherto, to impress me with an idea of my own utter weakness and helplessness, and to suggest an implicit, although bitterly reluctant submission to his arbitrary will. But, of late days, I had given myself up entirely to wine; and its maddening influence upon my hereditary temper rendered me more and more impatient of control. I began to murmur,--to hesitate,--to resist. And was it only fancy which induced me to believe that, with the increase of my own firmness, that of my tormentor underwent a proportional diminution? Be this as it may, I now began to feel the inspiration of a burning hope, and at length nurtured in my secret thoughts a stern and desperate resolution that I would submit no longer to be enslaved.

It was at Rome, during the Carnival of 18--, that I attended a masquerade in the palazzo of the Neapolitan Duke Di Broglio. I had indulged more freely than usual in the excesses of the wine-table; and now the suffocating atmosphere of the crowded rooms irritated me beyond endurance. The difficulty, too, of forcing my way through the mazes of the company contributed not a little to the ruffling of my temper; for I was anxiously seeking, (let me not say with what unworthy motive) the young, the gay, the beautiful wife of the aged and doting Di Broglio. With a too unscrupulous confidence she had previously communicated to me the secret of the costume in which she would be habited, and now, having caught a glimpse of her person, I was hurrying to make my way into her presence.--At this moment I felt a light hand placed upon my shoulder, and that ever-remembered, low, damnable whisper within my ear.

In an absolute phrenzy of wrath, I turned at once upon him who had thus interrupted me, and seized him violently by the collar. He was attired, as I had expected, in a costume altogether similar to my own; wearing a Spanish cloak of blue velvet, begirt about the waist with a crimson belt sustaining a rapier. A mask of black silk entirely covered his face.

“Scoundrel!” I said, in a voice husky with rage, while every syllable I uttered seemed as new fuel to my fury, “scoundrel! impostor! accursed villain! you shall not--you shall not dog me unto death! Follow me, or I stab you where you stand!”--and I broke my way from the ball-room into a small ante-chamber adjoining--dragging him unresistingly with me as I went.

Upon entering, I thrust him furiously from me. He staggered against the wall, while I closed the door with an oath, and commanded him to draw. He hesitated but for an instant; then, with a slight sigh, drew in silence, and put himself upon his defence.

The contest was brief indeed. I was frantic with every species of wild excitement, and felt within my single arm the energy and power of a multitude. In a few seconds I forced him by sheer strength against the wainscoting, and thus, getting him at mercy, plunged my sword, with brute ferocity, repeatedly through and through his bosom.

At that instant some person tried the latch of the door. I hastened to prevent an intrusion, and then immediately returned to my dying antagonist. But what human language can adequately portray that astonishment, that horror which possessed me at the spectacle then presented to view? The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangements at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror,--so at first it seemed to me in my confusion--now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait.

Thus it appeared, I say, but was not. It was my antagonist--it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of his dissolution. His mask and cloak lay, where he had thrown them, upon the floor. Not a thread in all his raiment--not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, mine own!

It was Wilson; but he spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said:

“You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead--dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist--and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself.”

Slave Stories

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The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery*

in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves, Tennessee, by Work Projects Administration

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Robert Falls was born on December 14, 1840, in the rambling one-story shack that accomodated the fifteen slaves of his Old Marster, [HW: Harry] Beattie Goforth, on a farm in Claiborne County, North Carolina. His tall frame is slightly stooped, but he is not subjected to the customary infirmities of the aged, other than poor vision and hearing. Fairly comfortable, he is spending his declining years in contentment, for he is now the first consideration of his daughter, Mrs. Lola Reed, with whom he lives at #608 S. Broadway, Knoxville, Tennessee. His cushioned rocking chair is the honor seat of the household. His apology for not offering it to visitors, is that he is "not so fast on his feet as he used to be."

Despite Uncle Robert's protest that his "mind comes and goes", his memory is keen, and his sense of humor unimpaired. His reminiscences of slave days are enriched by his ability to recreate scenes and incidents in few words, and by his powers of mimicry. "If I had my life to live over," he declares, "I would die fighting rather than be a slave again. I want no man's yoke on my shoulders no more. But in them days, us niggers didn't know no better. All we knowed was work, and hard work. We was learned to say, 'Yes Sir!' and scrape down and bow, and to do just exactly what we was told to do, make no difference if we wanted to or not. Old Marster and Old Mistress would say, 'Do this!' and we don' it. And they say, 'Come here!' and if we didn't come to them, they come to us. And they brought the bunch of switches with them."

"They didn't half feed us either. They fed the animals better. They gives the mules, ruffage and such, to chaw on all night. But they didn't give us nothing to chaw on. Learned us to steal, that's what they done. Why we would take anything we could lay our hands on, when we was hungry. Then they'd whip us for lieing when we say we dont know nothing about it. But it was easier to stand, when the stomach was full."

"Now my father, he was a fighter. He was mean as a bear. He was so bad to fight and so troublesome he was sold four times to my knowing and maybe a heap more times. That's how come my name is Falls, even if some does call me Robert Goforth. Niggers would change to the name of their new marster, every time they was sold. And my father had a lot of names, but kep the one of his marster when he got a good home. That man was Harry Falls. He said he'd been trying to buy father for a long time, because he was the best waggoner in all that country abouts. And the man what sold him to Falls, his name was Collins, he told my father, "You so mean, I got to sell you. You all time complaining

about you dont like your white folks. Tell me now who you wants to live with. Just pick your man and I will go see him." Then my father tells Collins, I want you to sell me to Marster Harry Falls. They made the trade. I disremember what the money was, but it was big. Good workers sold for \$1,000 and \$2,000. After that the white folks didn't have no more trouble with my father. But he'd still fight. That man would fight a she-bear and lick her every time."

"My mother was sold three times before I was born. The last time when Old Goforth sold her, to the slave speculators,--you know every time they needed money they would sell a slave,--and they was taking them, driving them, just like a pack of mules, to the market from North Carolina into South Carolina, she begun to have fits. You see they had sold her away from her baby. And just like I tell you she begun having fits. They got to the jail house where they was to stay that night, and she took on so, Jim Slade and Press Worthy--them was the slave speculators,--couldnt do nothing with her. Next morning one of them took her back to Marse Goforth and told him, "Look here. We cant do nothing with this woman. You got to take her and give us back our money. And do it now,' they says. And they mean it too. So Old Marse Goforth took my mother and give them back their money. After that none of us was ever separated. We all lived, a brother and two sisters and my mother, with the Goforths till freedom."

"And do you know, she never did get over having fits. She had them every change of the moon, or leastways every other moon change. But she kept on working. She was a hard worker. She had to be. Old Mistress see to that. She was meaner than old Marster, she was. She would sit by the spinning wheel and count the turns the slave women made. And they couldn't fool her none neither. My mother worked until ten o'clock almost every night because her part was to 'spend so many cuts' a day, and she couldnt get through no sooner. When I was a little shaver, I used to sit on the floor with the other little fellows while our mothers worked, and sometimes the white folks girls would read us a Bible story. But most of the time we slept. Right there on the floor. Then later, when I was bigger, I had to work with the men at night shelling corn, to take to town early mornings."

"Marster Goforth counted himself a good old Baptist Christian. The one good deed he did, I will never forget, he made us all go to church every Sunday. That was the onliest place off the farm we ever went. Every time a slave went off the place, he had to have a pass, except we didnt, for church. Everybody in thet country knowed that the Goforth niggers didn't have to have no pass to go to church. But that didn't make no difference to the Pattyroolers. They'd hide in the bushes, or wait along side of the road, and when the niggers come from meeting, the Pattyroolers's say, 'Whar's your pass'? Us Goforth niggers used to start running soon as we was out of church. We never got caught. That is why I tell you I cant use my legs like I used to.

If you was caught without no pass, the Pattyroolers give you five licks. They was licks! You take a bunch of five to seven Pattyroolers each giving five licks and the blood flows."

"Old Marster was too old to go to the war. He had one son was a soldier, but he never come home again. I never seen a soldier till the war was over and they begin to come back to the farms. We half-grown niggers had to work the farm, because all the famers had to give,--I believe it was a tenth--of their crops to help feed the soldiers. So we didnt know nothing about what was going on, no more than a hog. It was a long time before we knowed we was free. Then one night Old Marster come to our house and he say he wants to see us all before breakfast tomorrow morning and to come on over to his house. He got something to tell us."

"Next morning we went over there. I was the monkey, always acting smart. But I believe they liked me better than all of the others. I just spoke sassy-like and say, "Old Marster, what you got to tell us"? My mother said, "Shut your mouth fool. He'll whip you!" And Old Marster say,--"No I wont whip you. Never no more. Sit down thar all of you and listen to what I got to tell you. I hates to do it but I must. You all aint my niggers no more. You is free. Just as free as I am. Here I have raised you all to work for me, and now you are going to leave me. I am an old man, and I cant get along without you. I dont know what I am going to do." Well sir, it killed him. He was dead in less than ten months."

"Everybody left right now, but me and my brother and another fellow. Old Marster fooled us to believe we was duty-bound to stay with him till we was all twenty-one. But my brother, that boy was stubborn. Soon he say he aint going to stay there. And he left. In about a year, maybe less, he come back and he told me I didnt have to work for Old Goforth, I was free, sure enough free, and I went with him and he got me a job railroading. But the work was too hard for me. I couldnt stand it. So I left there and went to my mother. I had to walk. It was forty-five miles. I made it in a day. She got me work there where she worked."

"I remember so well, how the roads was full of folks walking and walking along when the niggers were freed. Didnt know where they was going. Just going to see about something else somewhere else. Meet a body in the road and they ask, 'Where you going'? 'Dont know.' 'What you going to do'? 'Dont know.' And then sometimes we would meet a white man and he would say, 'How you like to come work on my farm'? And we say, 'I dont know.' And then maybe he say, "If you come work for me on my farm, when the crops is in I give you five bushels of corn, five gallons of molasses, some ham-meat, and all your clothes and vittals whils you works for me." Alright! That's what I do. And then something begins to work up here, (touching his forehead with his

fingers) I begins to think and to know things. And I knowed then I could make a living for my own self, and I never had to be a slave no more."

"Now, Old Marster Goforth, had four sisters what owned slaves, and they wasnt mean to them like our Old Marster and Mistress. Some of the old slaves and their folks are still living on their places right to this day. But they never dispute none with their brother about how mean he treat his slaves. And him claiming to be such a Christian! Well, I reckon he's found out something about slave driving by now. The good Lord has to get his work in some time. And he'll take care of them low down Pattyroolers and slave speculators and mean Marsters and Mistress's. He's took good care of me in the years since I was free'd, only now, we needs Him again now and then. I just stand up on my two feet, raise my arms to heaven, and say, 'Lord, help me!' He never fails me. I asked him this morning, didnt I Lola? Asked him to render help. We need it. And here you come. Lola, just watch that lady write. If you and me had her education, we'd be fixed now wouldnt we? I never had no learning."

"Thank you Lady! (tucking the coin into his pocket wallet, along with his tobacco.) And thank you for coming. It does me a heap of good to see visitors and talk about the old times. Come again, wont you? And next time you come, I want to talk to you about old age pensions. I come here from Marian, N.C. three years ago, and they tell me I have to live here four, before I gets a pension. And as I done left North Carolina, I cant get a pension from them. But maybe you can tell me what to do. I likes this place. And I do hopes I get a pension before I gets to be a 'hundred."

INTERVIEW
FRANKIE GOOLE
204 5th Ave. So.
Nashville, Tenn.

"I wuz bawn in Smith County on uther side ob Lebanon. Ah'll be 85 y'ars ole Christmas Day.

Mah ole Missis wuz named Sallie, en mah Marster wuz George Waters. Mah mammy's name wuz Lucindia, she wuz sold fum me w'en I wuz six weeks ole, en mah Missis raised me. I allus slept wid her. Mah Missis wuz good ter me, but (her son) mah Marster whup'd me.

Dunno ob any ex-slaves votin' er holdin' office ob any kin.

I member de Ku Klux Klan en Pat-a-rollers. Dey would kum 'roun en whup

de niggers wid a bull whup. Ef'n dey met a niggah on de road dey'd say, "Whar ez you gwin dis time ob mawnin'?" De slaves would say, "We ez gwine ovuh 'yer ter stay aw'ile," en den dey would start beatin' dem. I'se stod in our do'er en 'yeard de hahd licks, en screams ob de ones dat wuz bein' whup'd, en I'd tell mah Missis, "Listen ter dat!" She would say, "See, dat ez w'at will happen ter you ef'n you try ter leave." I member one nite a Ku Klux Klan rode up ter our do'er. I tole mah Missis sum body wuz at de do'er wantin' ter know whar mah Marster wuz. She tole 'im he wuz d'ed en her son had gon' 'way dat mawnin'. He hunted all thro de house, en up in de loft, en said whar ez de niggers? Mah Missis tole i'm [TR: 'im] dey wuz down in de lettle house. He went down dere, woke dem up, axed dem 'bout dere Marster en den whup'd all ob dem. Ef de had de Ku Klux Klan now dere wouldin' be so menny peeples on de kounty road en in de pen.

I useter drive up de cows en mah feet would be so cole en mah toes cracked open en bleedin', en I'd be cryin' 'til I got almos' ter de house den I'd wipe mah eyes on de bottom ob mah dress, so de Marster wouldin' know dat I had bin cryin'. He'd say, "Frankie ain't you cryin'?" I'd say, "No suh." "Ez you cole?" "Yes, sir." He would say kum on en warm.

W'en de niggers wuz freed, all ob mah Missis slaves slipped 'way, 'cept me. One mawnin' she tole me ter go down en wake dem up, I went down en knocked, no body said nuthin'. I pushed on de do'er--hit kum op'n--en I fell in de room en hurt mah chin. I went back ter Missis--en she sez, "W'at ez de matter wid you?" I sez, "Uncle John en all ob dem ez gon'; I pushed on de do'er en fell in." She sez you know dey ez not gone, go back en git dem up. I had ter go back, but dey wur'ent dere.

No, I don't member de sta'rs fallin'.

Mah Missis didunt gib me nuthin, cept mah clothes, en she put dem in a carpet bag. Atter freedom mah mammy kum fum Lebanon en got me. Ah'll neber fergit dat day--Oh Lawdy! I kin see her now. Mah ole Missis' daughter-in-law had got a bunch ob switches ter whup me, I wuz standin' in de do'er shakin' all ovuh, en de young Missis wuz tellin' me ter git mah clothes off. I sez, "I se'd a 'oman kum'g thro de gate." Mah Missis sez, "Dat ez Lucindia" en de young Missis hid de switches. Mah mammy sez I'se kum ter git mah chile. Mah Missis tole her ter let me spend de nite wid her, den she'd send me ter de Court House at 9 o'clock next mawnin'. So I stayed wid de Missis dat nite, en she tole me ter alluz be a good girl, en don't let a man er boy trip me. I didunt know w'at she mean but I allus membered w'at she sai. I guess I wuz 'bout 12 y'ars ole w'en I lef' mah Missis en mah mammy brought me ter Nashville en put me ter wuk. De mawnin' I lef' mah Missis, I went ter de Court House en met mah mammy; de Court room wuz jammed wid peeples. De Jedge tole me ter hold my right hand up, I

wuz so skeered I stuck both hands up. Jedge sez, "Frankie ez dat yo mammy?" I sez, "I dunno, she sez she ez." (W'at did I know ob a mammy dat wuz tuk fum me at six weeks ole). He sez, "Wuz yo Marster good ter you?" I sez, "Mah Missis wuz, but mah Marster wasn't--he whup'd me." De Jedge said, "Whar did he whup you?" I tole him on mah back. He sez, "Frankie, ez you laughin'?" I sez, "No, sir." He said ter mah mammy, "Lucindia tek dis chile en be good ter her fer she has b'en mistreated. Sum day she can mek a livin' fer you." (En thank de Lawd I did keep her in her ole days en wuz able ter bury her.) At dat time money wuz called chin plaster en w'en I lef' out ob de court room diff'ent peeples gib me money en I had mah hat almos' full. Dat was de only money I had gib ter me.

I nussed Miss Sadie Pope Fall; she ma'ried Mat Gardner. I also nussed Miss Sue Porter Houston. I den wuk'd at de Blin Schul.

De fust pa'r ob shoes I eber had wuz atter I kum ter Nashville. Dey had high tops en wuz called bootees. I had sum red striped socks wid dem.

De ole songs I member:

"De Ole Time 'ligion."

"I'm Goin' ter Join de Ban."

W'en dey would sing deze songs hit would almos' mek you ha'r stand up on yo haid, de way dem peeples would jump en shout!

I member w'en sum ob de slaves run 'way durin' slavery.

I dunno any tales; mah mammy wasn't a 'oman ter talk much. Maybe ef she had bin I would hab had an easier time. As far as I know de ex-slaves hab had diff'ent kinds ob wuk since dere freedom. No, I ain' nebber se'd any ghos'. I'se bin in de woods en dark places, but didn't see nothin', en I'se not goin' ter say I did kaze I might git par'lized.

I went ter schul one y'ar at Fisk in de y'ar 1869.

De last man I wuk'd fer wuz at de Link Hotel. Den I started keepin' boarders. Hab fed all deze Nashville police. De police ez de ones dat hep'ed git deze relief orders fer me. I hab lived on dis street fer 60 years. I lived 22 y'ars whar de Hermitage Laundry ez. Dat ez whar I got de name "Mammie." W'iles livin' dere I raised eighteen chilluns white en black, en sum ob dem iz good ter me now.

I had sum papah's 'bout mah age en diff'ent things, but w'en de back waters got up, dey got lost. I didn't hab ter move but I kep prayin' en talkin' ter de Lawd en I b'leeve he 'Yeard me fer de water didn't

git in mah house.

I member w'en de yellow fever en de cholera wuz 'yer, in 1870 en 1873.
Dey didn't hab coffins nuff ter put dem in, so dey used boxes en piled
de boxes in waggins lak hauling wood.

I'se aint worth a dime now w'en hit kums ter wukin' fer I'se aint able
ter do nuthin, thoo I can't complain ob mah livin' since de relief has
bin takin' keer ob me.

Dis young peeples, "Oh mah Lawd!" Dey ain' worth talkin' 'bout. I
tries ter shame deze 'omen, dey drink (I call hit ole bust haid
whiskey), en do such mean things. I'se disgusted at mah own color. Dey
try ter know ter much, en dunno muthin', en dey don' do 'nuff wuk.

I nebber voted en dunno nothin' 'bout hit. Hab nebber had any frens in
office. Cain' member nothin' 'bout re'structon. I hab bin sick en
still don' feel right. Sumtimes I feels crazy.

Hab bin tole dat black cat crossin' road in frunt ob you wuz bad luck.
I nebber did b'leeve in any signs. Ef I ez ter hab bad luck, ah'll hab
hit.

I b'long ter de Baptist Chuch.

De culored peeples useter hab camp meetin's, en dey'd last fer two
weeks. Lawd hab mercy did we hab a time at dem meetin's, preachin',
singin', en shoutin'. En ovuh sum whar neah dey would be cookin'
mutton en diff'ent good things ter eat. Sum ob dem would shout 'til
dere throats would be sore en hit seemed dat sum ob dem niggahs didn't
keer ef dey got home ter wuk er not.

I sumtimes wish fer de good ole days. Deze days folks don't hab time
fer 'ligion. De dog-gone ole radio en udder things ez takin' hits
place.

Oh Lawdie how dey did baptize down at de wha'f! De Baptist peeple
would gather at de wha'f on de fust Sunday in May. Dey would kum fum
all de Baptist Chuches. Would leave de chuch singin' en shoutin' en
keep dat up 'til dey got ter de river. Hab seen dem wid new clothes on
git down on de groun en roll en git covered wid dirt. Sum ob dem would
almos' luze dere clothes, en dey'd fall down lak dey wuz dying.

Deze last few y'ars dey hab got ter stylish ter shout.

Chapter I.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Narrative of William W. Brown*, a Fugitive Slave

I was born in Lexington, Ky. The man who stole me as soon as I was born, recorded the births of all the infants which he claimed to be born his property, in a book which he kept for that purpose. My mother's name was Elizabeth. She had seven children, viz.: Solomon, Leander, Benjamin, Joseph, Millford, Elizabeth, and myself. No two of us were children of the same father. My father's name, as I learned from my mother, was George Higgins. He was a white man, a relative of my master, and connected with some of the first families in Kentucky.

My master owned about forty slaves, twenty-five of whom were field hands. He removed from Kentucky to Missouri when I was quite young, and settled thirty or forty miles above St. Charles, on the Missouri, where, in addition to his practice as a physician, he carried on milling, merchandizing and farming. He had a large farm, the principal productions of which were tobacco and hemp. The slave cabins were situated on the back part of the farm, with the house of the overseer, whose name was Grove Cook, in their midst. He had the entire charge of the farm, and having no family, was allowed a woman to keep house for him, whose business it was to deal out the provisions for the hands.

A woman was also kept at the quarters to do the cooking for the field hands, who were summoned to their unrequited toil every morning at four o'clock, by the ringing of a bell, hung on a post near the house of the overseer. They were allowed half an hour to eat their breakfast, and get to the field. At half past four a horn was blown by the overseer, which was the signal to commence work; and every one that was not on the spot at the time, had to receive ten lashes from the negro-whip, with which the overseer always went armed. The handle was about three feet long, with the butt-end filled with lead, and the lash, six or seven feet in length, made of cow-hide, with platted wire on the end of it. This whip was put in requisition very frequently and freely, and a small offence on the part of a slave furnished an occasion for its use. During the time that Mr. Cook was overseer, I was a house servant--a situation preferable to that of a field hand, as I was better fed, better clothed, and not obliged to rise at the ringing of the bell, but about half an hour after. I have often laid and heard the crack of the whip, and the screams of the slave. My mother was a field hand, and one morning was ten or fifteen minutes behind the others in getting into the field. As soon as she reached the spot where they were at work, the overseer commenced whipping her. She cried, "Oh! pray--Oh! pray--Oh! pray"--these are generally the words of slaves, when imploring mercy at the hands of their oppressors. I heard her voice, and knew it, and jumped out of my bunk, and went to the door. Though

the field was some distance from the house, I could hear every crack of the whip, and every groan and cry of my poor mother. I remained at the door, not daring to venture any further. The cold chills ran over me, and I wept aloud. After giving her ten lashes, the sound of the whip ceased, and I returned to my bed, and found no consolation but in my tears. Experience has taught me that nothing can be more heart-rending than for one to see a dear and beloved mother or sister tortured, and to hear their cries, and not be able to render them assistance. But such is the position which an American slave occupies.

My master, being a politician, soon found those who were ready to put him into office, for the favors he could render them; and a few years after his arrival in Missouri he was elected to a seat in the legislature. In his absence from home everything was left in charge of Mr. Cook, the overseer, and he soon became more tyrannical and cruel. Among the slaves on the plantation was one by the name of Randall. He was a man about six feet high, and well-proportioned, and known as a man of great strength and power. He was considered the most valuable and able-bodied slave on the plantation; but no matter how good or useful a slave may be, he seldom escapes the lash. But it was not so with Randall. He had been on the plantation since my earliest recollection, and I had never known of his being flogged. No thanks were due to the master or overseer for this. I have often heard him declare that no white man should ever whip him--that he would die first.

Cook, from the time that he came upon the plantation, had frequently declared that he could and would flog any nigger that was put into the field to work under him. My master had repeatedly told him not to attempt to whip Randall, but he was determined to try it. As soon as he was left sole dictator, he thought the time had come to put his threats into execution. He soon began to find fault with Randall, and threatened to whip him if he did not do better. One day he gave him a very hard task--more than he could possibly do; and at night, the task not being performed, he told Randall that he should remember him the next morning. On the following morning, after the hands had taken breakfast, Cook called out to Randall, and told him that he intended to whip him, and ordered him to cross his hands and be tied. Randall asked why he wished to whip him. He answered, because he had not finished his task the day before. Randall said that the task was too great, or he should have done it. Cook said it made no difference--he should whip him. Randall stood silent for a moment, and then said, "Mr. Cook, I have always tried to please you since you have been on the plantation, and I find you are determined not to be satisfied with my work, let me do as well as I may. No man has laid hands on me, to whip me, for the last ten years, and I have long since come to the conclusion not to be whipped by any man living." Cook, finding by Randall's determined look and gestures, that he would resist, called three of the hands from their work, and commanded them to seize Randall, and tie him. The hands stood still;--they knew Randall--and they also knew him to be a

powerful man, and were afraid to grapple with him. As soon as Cook had ordered the men to seize him, Randall turned to them, and said--"Boys, you all know me; you know that I can handle any three of you, and the man that lays hands on me shall die. This white man can't whip me himself, and therefore he has called you to help him." The overseer was unable to prevail upon them to seize and secure Randall, and finally ordered them all to go to their work together.

Nothing was said to Randall by the overseer for more than a week. One morning, however, while the hands were at work in the field, he came into it, accompanied by three friends of his, Thompson, Woodbridge and Jones. They came up to where Randall was at work, and Cook ordered him to leave his work, and go with them to the barn. He refused to go; whereupon he was attacked by the overseer and his companions, when he turned upon them, and laid them, one after another, prostrate on the ground. Woodbridge drew out his pistol, and fired at him, and brought him to the ground by a pistol ball. The others rushed upon him with their clubs, and beat him over the head and face, until they succeeded in tying him. He was then taken to the barn, and tied to a beam. Cook gave him over one hundred lashes with a heavy cow-hide, had him washed with salt and water, and left him tied during the day. The next day he was untied, and taken to a blacksmith's shop, and had a ball and chain attached to his leg. He was compelled to labor in the field, and perform the same amount of work that the other hands did. When his master returned home, he was much pleased to find that Randall had been subdued in his absence.



The Inaugural Address

Issued on: January 20, 2017

*Remarks of President Donald J. Trump--as prepared for delivery
Inaugural address, a Project Gutenberg e-text*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2017
WASHINGTON, D.C.

As Prepared for Delivery-

Chief Justice Roberts, President Carter, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, fellow Americans, and people of the world: thank you.

We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and to restore its promise for all of our people.

Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for years to come.

We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will get the job done.

Every four years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition. They have been magnificent.

Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one Administration to another, or from one party to another--but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People.

For too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost.

Washington flourished--but the people did not share in its wealth.

Politicians prospered--but the jobs left, and the factories closed.

The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country.

Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.

That all changes--starting right here, and right now, because this moment is your moment: it belongs to you.

It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America.

This is your day. This is your celebration.

And this, the United States of America, is your country.

What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people.

January 20th 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.

The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer.

Everyone is listening to you now.

You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before.

At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens.

Americans want great schools for their children, safe neighborhoods for their families, and good jobs for themselves.

These are the just and reasonable demands of a righteous public.

But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of knowledge; and the crime and gangs and drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.

This American carnage stops right here and stops right now.

We are one nation--and their pain is our pain. Their dreams are our dreams; and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.

For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry;

Subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military;

We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own;

And spent trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay.

We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has disappeared over the horizon.

One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind.

The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world.

But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future.

We assembled here today are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power.

From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.

From this moment on, it's going to be America First.

Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families.

We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength.

I will fight for you with every breath in my body--and I will never, ever let you down.

America will start winning again, winning like never before.

We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams.

We will build new roads, and highways, and bridges, and airports, and tunnels, and railways all across our wonderful nation.

We will get our people off of welfare and back to work--rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor.

We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and Hire American.

We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world--but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first.

We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to follow.

We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones--and unite the civilized world against Radical Islamic Terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth.

At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other.

When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice.

The Bible tells us, "how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity."

We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity.

When America is united, America is totally unstoppable.

There should be no fear--we are protected, and we will always be protected.

We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement and, most importantly, we are protected by God.

Finally, we must think big and dream even bigger.

In America, we understand that a nation is only living as long as it is striving.

We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action--constantly complaining but never

doing anything about it.

The time for empty talk is over.

Now arrives the hour of action.

Do not let anyone tell you it cannot be done. No challenge can match the heart and fight and spirit of America.

We will not fail. Our country will thrive and prosper again.

We stand at the birth of a new millennium, ready to unlock the mysteries of space, to free the Earth from the miseries of disease, and to harness the energies, industries and technologies of tomorrow.

A new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights, and heal our divisions.

It is time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American Flag.

And whether a child is born in the urban sprawl of Detroit or the windswept plains of Nebraska, they look up at the same night sky, they fill their heart with the same dreams, and they are infused with the breath of life by the same almighty Creator.

So to all Americans, in every city near and far, small and large, from mountain to mountain, and from ocean to ocean, hear these words:

You will never be ignored again.

Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams, will define our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way.

Together, We Will Make America Strong Again.

We Will Make America Wealthy Again.

We Will Make America Proud Again.

We Will Make America Safe Again.

And, Yes, Together, We Will Make America Great Again. Thank you, God Bless You, And God Bless America.

Slave Stories – South Carolina

Project #1655

Mrs. Genevieve W. Chandler

Murrells Inlet, S. C.

Georgetown County

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Slave Narratives Vol. XIV. South Carolina, Part I*, by Various

MOM HAGAR

(Verbatim Conversation)

Mom Hagar Brown lives in her little weathered cabin on forty odd acres left by her husband, Caleb Brown. Caleb died in Georgia where he had been sent to the penitentiary for stealing a hog that another man stole. Aunt Hagar has grands settled all around her and she and the grands divide up the acreage which is planted in corn, sweet potatoes, cotton, and some highland rice. She ministers to them all when sick, acts as mid-wife when necessary, and divides her all with her kin and friends--white and black. She wages a war on ground-moles, at which she laughs and says she resembles. Ground-mole beans almost a foot long protect and decorate her yard. She has apple and fig trees, and scuppernong grape vines grow rank and try to climb all her trees.

(Monday morning she hobbles up on a stick--limping and looking sick.)
Comes in kitchen door.

Lillie: "Aunt Hagar, how you?"

Hagar: "Painful. Doctor tell me I got the tonsil. Want to represent me one time and take them out. I say, 'No Doctor! Get in hospital, can't get out! Let me stay here till my change come.' Yeddy? I ain't wuth! Ain't wuth! Ain't got a piece o' sense. Yeddy? Ellen say she want God to take she tomorrow? When you ready it's 'God take me now! All right son!' (Greeting Zackie who enters kitchen.)

Zackie: "Aunt Hagar, how you feel?"

Hagar: "I ain't wuth son. How's all?"

Zackie: "Need a little more grits!"

Lillie: "Hear Zackie! Mom Hagar, that ain't hinder him ordering another!" (The fact that food is scarce doesn't limit Zackie's family.)

Hagar: "You hear bout this Jeremiah broke in somewhere--get all kinds likker and canned things and different thing?"

Zackie: "Must a broke in that place call 'Stumble Inn!' (Very seriously.) That Revenue man been there."

Hagar: "I yeddy last night! Say he there in news-paper. Mary say, 'see 'em in paper!' Mrs. White gone to child funeral. That been in paper too. Mary see that in paper. Easter say old lady gone dere. Doctor say better go. Child sick. Child seven years old. Fore they get there tell 'em say, 'Child dead!'

"People gone in patch to pick watermillon. Ain't want child to go. You know chillun! Child gone in. Ain't want 'em for go. You know. Child pick watermillon. Ketch up one--I forgotten what pound they say. Roll. Roll duh watermillon. Roll 'em on snake! They say, 'Snake bite 'em?' Child say, 'No. Must a scratch.' See blood run on boy leg. Child get unconscion that minute. Gone right out. Jess so. Ease out so. I cry. I cry!"

Lillie: "You know 'em, Mom Hagar?"

Hagar: "No! No! Lill, fever got me! Cold get me till my rump dead. Got hospital boy rouse one time say, 'Ma, less go home! Red stripe snake bite me.'"

* * * * *

Hagar: "Klu Klux?" (Chin cupped in hand--elbow on knee--looking way off--)

"Reckon that the way them old timey people call 'em. Have to run way, you go church. Going to come in to ketch you or do any mischievous thing--come carry you place they going beat you--in suit of white. Old white man to Wilderness Plantation. Parish old man name. Treat his wife bad. Come to house, ain't crack. Come right in suit of white. Drag him out--right to Woodstock there where Mr. Dan get shoot. Put a beating on that white man there till he mess up! Oman never gone back to him yet!"

"A man wuz name (I forgot what the man name wuz)--wuz a white man mess round wid a colored woman and they didn't do a God thing but gone and put a beating on you, darling! Come in. Grab you and go. Put a beating on you till you can't see. Know they got a good grub to lick you wid. They git done you can't sit down. Ain't going carry you just for play with."

"Mom Hagar, you wanten vote?"

Hagar: "Oh my God!"

"Aunt Hagar are the colored people happier now than the old timey slavery time people?"

Hagar: "Young people now got the world by force. Don't care. Got more trick than law low. Tricky! Can't beat the old people. Can't equal to 'em. Some the young people you say 'AMEN' in church they make fun o' you. Every tub stand on his own bottom. Can't truss 'em.

"Ma say some dem plan to run way. Say, 'Less run! Less run!' Master ketch dem and fetch dem in. Lay 'em cross barrel. Beat dem till they wash in blood. Fetch 'em back. Place 'em cross the barrel--hogsket barrel--Christ! They ramp wash in blood! Beat Ma sister. He sister sickly. Never could clear task--like he want. My Ma have to work he self to death to help Henritta so sickly. Clear task to keep from beat. Some obersheer mean. Oaks labor. (Meaning her Ma and ma's family were laboring on Oaks Plantation--the plantation where Gov. Joseph Allston and Theodosia his wife lived on Waccamaw.) Mother Sally Doctor. Ma got four chillun. One was Emmeline, one Getty, one Katrine one Hagar! I older than Gob (Katrine). Could a call doctor for Gob if I had any sense." (Big nuff to gone for doctor when Gob born.)

"Stay in the field!
Stay in the field!
Stay in the field till the war been end!"

(This is Aunt Hagar's favorite song)

Mom Hagar Brown--age 77
Murrells Inlet, S. C.
July 4th, 1937.

=====
Project #1655
W. W. Dixon
Winnsboro, S. C.
ibid

MILLIE BARBER
EX-SLAVE 82 YEARS OLD.

"Hope you find yourself well dis mornin', white folks. I's just common; 'spect I eats too much yesterday. You know us celebrated yesterday, 'cause it was de Fourth of July. Us had a good dinner on dis 2,000 acre farm of Mr. Owens. God bless dat white boss man! What would us old no 'count niggers do widout him? Dere's six or seven, maybe eight of us out here over eighty years old. 'Most of them is like me, not able to hit a lick of work, yet he take care of us; he sho' does.

"Mr. Owens not a member of de church but he allowed dat he done found out dat it more blessed to give than to receive, in case like us.

"You wants to know all 'bout de slavery time, de war, de Ku Kluxes and everything? My tongue too short to tell you all dat I knows. However, if it was as long as my stockin's, I could tell you a trunk full of good and easy, bad and hard, dat dis old life-stream have run over in eighty-two years. I's hoping to reach at last them green fields of Eden of de Promise Land. 'Scuse me ramblin' 'round, now just ask me questions; I bet I can answer all you ask.

"My pa name, Tom McCullough; him was a slave of old Marster John McCullough, whose big two-story house is de oldest in Fairfield County. It stands today on a high hill, just above de banks of Dutchman Creek. Big road run right by dat house. My mammy name, Nicie. Her b'long to de Weir family; de head of de family die durin' de war of freedom. I's not supposed to know all he done, so I'll pass over dat. My mistress name, Eliza; good mistress. Have you got down dere dat old marster just took sick and die, 'cause he wasn't touched wid a bullet nor de life slashed out of him wid a sword?

"Well, my pa b'longin' to one man and my mammy b'longin' to another, four or five miles apart, caused some confusion, mix-up, and heartaches. My pa have to git a pass to come to see my mammy. He come sometimes widout de pass. Patrollers catch him way up de chimney hidin' one night; they stripped him right befo' mammy and give him thirty-nine lashes, wid her cryin' and a hollerin' louder than he did.

"Us lived in a log house; handmade bedstead, wheat straw mattress, cotton pillows, plenty coverin' and plenty to eat, sich as it was. Us never git butter or sweet milk or coffee. Dat was for de white folks but in de summer time, I minds de flies off de table wid the peafowl feather brush and eat in de kitchen just what de white folks eat; them was very good eatin's I's here for to tell you. All de old slaves and them dat worked in de field, got rations and de chillun were fed at de kitchen out-house. What did they git? I 'members they got peas, hog meat, corn bread, 'lasses, and buttermilk on Sunday, then they got greens, turnips, taters, shallots, collards, and beans through de week. They were kept fat on them kind of rations.

"De fact is I can't 'member us ever had a doctor on de place; just a granny was enough at child birth. Slave women have a baby one day, up and gwine 'round de next day, singin' at her work lak nothin' unusual had happened.

"Did I ever git a whippin'? Dat I did. How many times? More than I can count on fingers and toes. What I git a whippin' for? Oh, just one thing, then another. One time I break a plate while washin' dishes and another time I spilt de milk on de dinin' room floor. It was always for somethin', sir. I needed de whippin'.

"Yes sir, I had two brothers older than me; one sister older than me and one brother younger than me.

"My young marster was killed in de war. Their names was Robert, Smith, and Jimmie. My young mistress, Sarah, married a Sutton and moved to Texas. Nancy marry Mr. Wade Rawls. Miss Janie marry Mr. Hugh Melving. At this marriage my mammy was give to Miss Janie and she was took to Texas wid her young baby, Isaiah, in her arms. I have never seen or heard tell of them from dat day to dis.

"De Yankees come and burn de gin-house and barns. Open de smokehouse, take de meat, give de slaves some, shoot de chickens, and as de mistress and girls beg so hard, they left widout burnin' de dwellin' house.

"My oldest child, Alice, is livin' and is fifty-one years old de 10th of dis last May gone. My first husband was Levi Young; us lived wid Mr. Knox Picket some years after freedom. We moved to Mr. Rubin Lumpkin's plantation, then to George Boulwares. Well, my husband die and I took a fool notion, lak most widows, and got into slavery again. I marry Prince Barber; Mr. John Hollis, Trial Justice, tied de knot. I loved dat young nigger more than you can put down dere on paper, I did. He was black and shiny as a crow's wing. Him was white as snow to dese old eyes. Ah, the joy, de fusses, de ructions, de beatin's, and de makin' ups us had on de Ed Shannon place where us lived. Us stay dere seven long years.

"Then de Klu Kluxes comed and lak to scared de life out of me. They ask where Prince was, searched de house and go away. Prince come home 'bout daylight. Us took fright, went to Marster Will Durham's and asked for advice and protection. Marster Will Durham fixed it up. Next year us moved to dis place, he own it then but Marster Arthur Owens owns it now. Dere is 2,000 acres in dis place and another 1,000 acres in de Rubin Lumpkin place 'joinin' it.

"Prince die on dis place and I is left on de mercy of Marster Arthur, livin' in a house wid two grandchillun, James twelve years, and John Roosevelt Barber, eight years old. Dese boys can work a little. They can pick cotton and tote water in de field for de hands and marster say: 'Every little help'.

"My livin' chillun ain't no help to me. Dere's Willie, I don't know where he is. Prince is wid Mr. Freeman on de river. Maggie is here on de place but she no good to me.

"I 'spect when I gits to drawin' down dat pension de white folks say is comin', then dere will be more folks playin' in my backyard than dere is today."



On The Inhumation Of The Dead In Cities.

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Curiosities of Medical Experience*, by J. G. (John Gideon) Millingen

From time immemorial, medical men have strongly pointed out to municipal authorities the dangers that arise from burying the dead within the precincts of cities or populous towns. Impressed with the same conviction, ancient legislators only allowed to the most illustrious citizens a sepulchre in the temple of the gods. Euclides was interred in the temple of Diana Euclis, as a reward for his pious journey to Delphi in search of the sacred fire; the Magnesians erected a monument to Themistocles in their forum; Euphron received the same honour in Corinth; and Medea buried her two sons, Mermerus and Pheres, under the protection of Juno Acræa's altars, to guard their ashes from their persecutors. Lycurgus was perhaps the only Grecian legislator who recommended inhumation in temples and in cities, to accustom youth to the daily spectacle of death.

The primitive Grecians, it appears, buried their dead in or about their dwellings; and we find a law amongst the Thebans, ordaining that every person who built a house should provide a repository for the dead upon his premises. In latter days, both Grecians and Romans erected their tombs outside of their cities, and chiefly by the road-side. It appears also, that, among the Romans, the bodies of the lower orders were promiscuously cast into wells, called *_fruticuli_*. Horace seems to allude to this practice. *_Hoc miseræ plebi stabat commune sepulchrum._* The funerals of the wealthy patricians appear to have been most sumptuous and costly, the pall formed of valuable materials and decorated with splendid ornaments. Thus Statius:

Ditantur flammæ: non unquam opulentioan ille ante cinis: crepitant gemmæ: atque immane litescit argentum, et pietis exsudat vestibus aurum. The laws of the twelve tables prohibited the practice of this waste of gold.

Both religious and civil motives might have dictated the propriety of this regulation. The traveller, setting out upon a journey, and passing by the sepulchres of his sires, could in the presence of their manes invoke their protection; and on his return to his penates, safe from danger, he could put up thanks to the gods for his preservation. As a prudential measure, the interment of the dead beyond the walls of their towns prevented the

fatal consequences that might have arisen from extensive putrefaction and infection, and moreover the burning of bodies would have exposed the adjoining buildings to the danger of frequent fires. It is also possible that policy dictated these sanatory enactments. The ancients held the remains of the departed as a sacred trust, in the defence of which they were ever prepared to fall; and it is not improbable that their warriors would have rushed forth to meet the invader, before he would have defiled, by his approach to their cities, the ashes of their ancestors. So scrupulously religious were the Athenians in performing the funeral rites of the dead, that they put to death ten of their commanders, after the battle of Arginusæ, for not having committed to the earth the dead bodies that floated on the waters. Such was the dread of being deprived of sepulchral rites, that it is related of several citizens of Cappadocia, that during the pestilence that devastated their town in the reign of Gallus and Valerian, they actually shut themselves up to perish in their tombs.

There is no doubt but that their dead were buried in such a manner as not to prove injurious to the survivors; and Seneca plainly says, "Non defunctorum causâ, sed vivorum, inventa est sepultura." The ancients both burned and buried their dead, but inhumation appears to have been the most early and the most approved rite. "Let the dead be buried," says a law of Cecrops. Solon justifies the claims of the Athenians to the island of Salamis, from the circumstance of the dead bodies interred on its shores having been inhumed according to the Athenian custom, with their feet turned to the west, whereas the Megarensians turned theirs to the east.

In various instances the burial or the burning appear to have been adopted upon philosophical doctrines. Democritus, with a view to facilitate resurrection, recommended interment, and Pliny thus ridicules the intention: "Similis et de asservandis corporibus hominum, et reviviscendis promissa à Democrito vanitas, qui non revivixit ipse." Heraclitus, who considered fire as the first principle, advocated the funeral pile; while Thales, who deemed water the chief element, urged the propriety of committing the departed to the damp bosom of the earth. Although burning the dead was customary, there were curious exceptions to the rule. Infants who died before cutting their teeth, persons struck dead with lightning, were buried. The place of interment of infants was called the *_suggrundarium_*.

The early Christians inhumed the bodies of their martyrs in their temples. This honour was afterwards conferred on the remains of distinguished citizens, illustrious prelates, and princes. The infectious diseases which at various periods arose from this custom, induced Theodosius, in his celebrated code, strictly to prohibit it; and he even ordered that the remains of the dead thus inhumed should be removed out of Rome. The vanity of man, and the cupidity of the priesthood, soon overruled these wise regulations. Every family possessing sufficient means, claimed a vault

within the churches, and thereby the revenues of the clergy were materially increased. At all times, even the dead appeared to have shared with the living the obligation of supporting the ministers of the altar. By a law of Hippias, the priestesses of Minerva received a choenix[6] of wheat, and one of barley, with an obolus, for every individual who departed this life. The *libitinarii* of the Romans fulfilled the duties of our undertakers, or rather of the directors of funeral pomp of the French; yet they were attached to the temple of the goddess Libitina, whose priests received a fee in silver for every one who died, under the name of *Libitinæ ratio*. Suetonius informs us, that in Nero's time the mortality was so great during one autumn, that thirty thousand of these silver pieces were deposited in the fatal treasury. To increase the emoluments of this sacerdotal body, these *libitinarii* sold at high prices every thing that was requisite for the funeral ceremonies, received a toll at the city gate through which the bodies were carried out, as well as at the entrance of the amphitheatre through which the dead gladiators were borne away. Phædrus alludes to this speculation in one of his fables, when speaking of a miser,

Qui circumcidis omnem impensam funeris,
Libitina ne quid de tuo faciat lucrum.

It is supposed that this avaricious divinity owed her name to the displeasure which it must have occasioned to all who heard it,-- *quòd nemini libeat*; but it is also possible that it was derived from her bearing poor mortals away, whenever she fancied it, and *ad libitum*.

In more modern times, Theodolphus, Bishop of Orleans, complained to Charlemagne that lucre and vanity had converted churches into charnel-houses, disgraceful to the clergy and perilous to the community. It was upon this representation that this prince, in his capitularies, prohibited burials in churches under heavy penalties. But the laws of the wisest could not prevent priesthood from considering this source of emolument, although endangering public salubrity, an indisputable property that could not be meddled with without endangering the church.

In England the custom of burying the dead in churches was first sanctioned by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 758, it having been previously forbidden by Augustine, who had decreed that no corpse either of prince or prelate should be buried within the walls of a city.

In France, Maret in 1773, and Vicq d'Azyr in 1778, pointed out the danger of this practice in such glaring colours, that government by an edict, only allowed church interment to certain dignitaries; but in 1804, by a wise law that should be enforced in every civilized country, inhumation in cities was entirely abolished. Amongst the numerous well authenticated evil results of burying in churches that led to this wise prohibition, the following were the most striking and circumstantial:

In 1773, in Saulieu, Burgundy, an epidemic disease arising from the inhumation of a corpse in the church of St. Saturnin created considerable alarm. The body of a corpulent person had been interred on the 3d of March, and a woman was buried near it on the 20th of April following: both had died of a reigning fever. During the last burial a fetid effluvia arose from the vault, which pervaded the whole church; and, out of one hundred and seventy persons who were present, one hundred and forty-nine were attacked with the prevailing malady, although its progress had been arrested amongst the other inhabitants of the town.

In 1774, a similar accident occurred in a village near Nantes, where several coffins were removed in a vault, to make room for the lord of the manor: fifteen of the bystanders died from the emanation.

In 1744, one-third of the inhabitants of Lectouse perished from a fever of a malignant character that manifested itself after some works that required the removal of a burial-ground. Two destructive epidemics swept away large proportions of the population of Riom and Ambert, two towns in Auvergne.

Taking this matter under consideration in a moral, or even a religious light, it may be questioned whether any advantage can accrue from the continuance of this pernicious custom, which during the prevalence of epidemic diseases endangers the life of every person who resides near a church. Does it add to the respect which the remains of the dead are entitled to? Certainly not: the constant tolling of "the sullen bell"--the daily cortège of death that passes before us--the graves that we hourly contemplate, perusing monumental records which more frequently excite unseasonable laughter than serious reflection--every thing, in short, tends to make death of little or no moment, except to those who have heard the mutes gossiping at their door. So accustomed, indeed, are we from our childhood to sepulchral scenes, that, were it not for the parish-officers, our churchyards would become the playground of every truant urchin; and how often do we behold human bones become sportive baubles in the wanton pranks of the idlers, who group around the gravedigger's preparations! So callous are we to all feelings of religious awe when surrounded with the dead, that our cemeteries are not unfrequently made the rendezvous of licentiousness and the assembly-ground of crime, where thieves cast lots upon a tomb for the division of their spoil.

With what different feelings does the traveller wander over the cemetery of Père la Chaise? I am well aware that many of the gewgaw attributes that there decorate the grave, have been called the "frippery," "the foppery" of grief; but does there exist a generous, a noble sentiment, that may not be perverted by interested motives and hypocrisy into contemptible professions? How often is the sublime rendered ridiculous by bad taste and hyperbolic affectation! When we behold the fond lover pressing to his lips a lock of hair, or the portrait of all that he holds dear, the cold calculating egotist may call this the frippery of love;

but the stoic who thinks thus, has never known the "sweet pangs" of requited affection, when, in bitter absence, the recollection of bliss gone by, imbodyes in our imagination the form we once pressed to our respondent heart. The creation of our busy fancy stands before us, gazing on us with that tender look that in happier days greeted the hour of meeting; or trembles in our tears as when we last parted--to meet, perhaps, no more! With what fervour of religious love do we not behold the simple girl kneeling with uplift eye and hand on the green sod that covers all that endeared her to existence, till, overwhelmed with burning, choking regrets--as idle as they are uncontrollable--she sinks prostrate on the cold earth that now shrouds that bosom which once nestled her young hopes and fears! There have I seen the pale, the haggard youth,--to all appearances a student,--seated mournfully by the side of a tomb, absorbed in deep thought, heedless of the idlers who passed by him, looking at him perhaps with contempt!--heedless of the swift flight of time, which shrouded him imperceptibly in darkness, until he was warned by the guardian of the dead that it was time to depart--and to depart _alone_! No inscription recorded the "one loved name;" he would not expose it to the unfeeling gaze of the heartless tourist: all he would willingly have traced upon her tomb, would have been "Here lies _my own_"

The mouldering earth, the fleshless skeleton over which he mourns, cannot obliterate the remembrance of what she was: though her eyes, perhaps, no longer exist, still their former languid, liquid look of bliss, beams freshly in his recollection. The lips which once pronounced the long wished-for avowal of mutual love are still moist and open to memory's embrace--still seem to lisp the delicious _tu_! Our language is rich, without comparison richer far than the French; but we have nothing so endearing, so bewitching, as their _tu-toiement_ : our _thee's_ and _thou's_ are frigid, chilly, when compared to the _first toi_ that escapes inadvertently from beloved lips! A French writer has beautifully expressed this exquisite moment: "Le _premier tu_ est tout-puissant; c'est le _fiat lux_ de l'âme; il est sublime, il débrouille le chaos!"

Sublime are the words, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!" Would it be irreligious to say, "Happy are the dead who die beloved?" Their fond and ardent heart had never been chilled by the withering hand of infidelity and ingratitude. They died in an ecstatic dream of perfect bliss on earth, and never were awakened to the world's mocking realities!--they died when they felt and believed in their heart of hearts that they were dearly beloved--could not be loved more dearly: with that conviction, death, in a worldly acceptance, can never be untimely. Probably, they died still sufficiently animated by a latent, lingering spark of life, to press the hand that was so often linked in mutual pressure in happy days--to feel the burning tear of anguish drop on the pale cheek--to hear the sad, the awful, last word, _à Dieu!_ --an expression that habit has rendered trivial, but which bears with it, in the tenderest solicitude, the most hallowed meaning; since, in pronouncing it, we leave all that we cherish under the protection and the safeguard of

OUR GOD.

Affection deprives death of all horrors. We shrink not from the remains of what we cherished. Despite its impiety, there was something refined in that conviction of the ancients, who imagined that in bestowing their farewell kiss they inhaled the souls of those they loved. How sweet are those lines of Macrobius, originally attributed to Plato!

Dum semihulco suavio
Meum pullum suavior,
Dulcemque florem spiritus
Duco ex aperto tramite,
Animo tunc ægra et saucia
Cucurrit ad labia mihi!

Our Shakspeare has quaintly, yet beautifully, described this parting embrace:

And lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death.

Nor was it only on the dying that the ancients bestowed this mark of fondness: Tibullus and Propertius tell us, that, as their bodies were laid on the funeral pile, they clasped them in a fond and last embrace.

In regard to the painted crosses, the chaplets, the garlands of flowers, which mark the hallowed resting-place of the departed, it may be said that they are but romantic and poetical expressions of grief. If it were only real grief that expressed itself by outward testimonials, how soon would mourning be banished as an idle expense!--the "inky cloak," and customary "suits of solemn black--the trappings and the suit of woes," be laid aside! What a different feeling does the splendid catafalcum, covered with black velvet, studded with silver tears, and illumined by thousands of glaring tapers, excite, when compared with the simple and verdant graves which point out the spot "where souls do couch in flowers," blessed by affection's tears instead of lustral waters. At all periods, amongst every nation, flowers and certain trees seem to have been consecrated to the dead. The Romans planted the wild vine and the box around their tombs. Thus Martial to Alcimenes:

Accipe, non Phario nutantia pondera saxo,
Quæ cineri vanus dat ruitura labor,
Sed fragiles buxos, et opacas palmitis umbras,
Quæque virent lacrymis humida prata meis.

The wealthy assigned a beauteous garden to their departed favourites, as in the instance of Augustus and Mæcenæ. Not only did they suspend garlands over their tombs, but scattered flowers around them. Again in

Virgil,

Purpureosque jacet flores, ac talia fatur.

The same custom prevailed amongst the Grecians, who considered all purple and white flowers acceptable to the dead. The Thessalian's strewed Achilles' grave with the immortal amaranth and lilies. Electra complains that the tomb of Agamemnon received no myrtle boughs; in short, instances of this practice are every where to be found. In addition to flowers and perfumes, ribands and hair were also deposited on their sepulchres. Electra adorns Agamemnon's tomb with her locks, and Canace laments that she had not been able to perform the same rite on her beloved Macareus. Poets tell us that precious ointments and wines were poured upon their monuments; and we find, in Euripides, Helen bidding Hermione to take locks of her hair, honey mixed with milk, and wine, to the sepulchre of her aunt.

Amongst the Chinese, to the present day, the cypress and the fir, shade their cemeteries: the former tree, an attribute of Pluto was ever considered funereal, hence called *_feralis_*; and the *_feralia_* were festivals in honour of the dead, observed by the Romans. Varro pretends that the cypress was called funereal from *_funus_*, as it emitted an antiseptic aroma. Pliny and others pretend that it typified the dead, from its never shooting out fresh sprouts when the trunk was hewn down. At any rate, to this hour, it is planted in burying-grounds in every civilized country.

The yew-tree has also been considered an emblem of mourning from the earliest times. The custom of planting it singly appears also to be very ancient. Statius, in his Thebaid, calls it the *_solitary yew_*. In England, the trees planted in churchyards were protected by legal enactments, as appears by a statute of 35 Edward I. From the scarcity of bow staves, they had been frequently despoiled by our numerous archers; and, to meet this service, by an enactment of Edward IV. every foreign trader was obliged to bring in four bow staves for every ton of imported merchandise; Elizabeth, from the scarcity of this important article, put the statute in full force.

Let us then hope, both for the living and the dead, that this custom, which obtains in France and other countries, will be adopted by us, instead of becoming the subject of ridicule. It is far more desirable to see families repairing to the tomb of the departed on the anniversary of their death, than to behold them daily passing by their remains with cold indifference.

It would scarcely be believed upon the continent of Europe, that to this very hour bodies are buried in confined churchyards in the most crowded and dirty parts of the British metropolis, such as Russel-court, Drury-lane, and various other similar holes and corners; the rudest

nations were never guilty of such a glaring impropriety. In the kingdom of Siam, the remains of the opulent are burnt with great ceremony, while the bodies of the poor are carried out and exposed on mountains: in Ceylon, the remains of the indigent are interred in the neighbouring woods; the rich consumed on gorgeous funeral piles.

The Chinese inhumate their dead at some distance from their cities and towns; it is only the bodies of the rich and noble that are allowed to remain on the premises of the family. Navarette mentions a curious custom prevalent in one of their provinces, Chan Si, where, in the event of two betrothed persons dying at the same period, they are married while their coffins are still in their former dwelling, and afterwards burnt together. By the accounts of various travellers, the wealthy Chinese are burnt with great pomp, and their monuments are most curious and expensive. Their mausoleums are actually halls or grottos, decorated with splendour: and they inter with the deceased many articles to which he might have been attached during life, and that may add to his comforts after death. A custom that was more prevalent before the invasion of the Tartars--a comb, a pair of scissars to pare his nails; four little purses, containing the nail-parings of the defunct, were placed in the coffin, and, amongst the wealthy, gold coin and jewels were inserted in the mouth. The Hottentots bury their dead in the wild clefts of rocks and caverns; the Peruvians bear theirs to the neighbouring hills and mountains. The Greenlanders wrap their dead in furs and skins, and carry them to a considerable distance from their huts. In Kamtschatka and Siberia bodies are covered with snow in caverns and caves; and the African savages perform the same funeral rites as the Irish: their dead are carried to the burying-ground, followed by crowds of relatives and other people, who join the procession, bellowing and howling most piteously, "Oh! why did you die? did you want any thing that was ever denied you?" and after the funeral the survivors invariably get drunk on palm-wine, or any strong liquor they can procure; a custom similar to the _circumpotatio_ of the Romans.



Letter Ii.

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VAMPYRISM.—Tale exemplifying the superstition—The Vampyr state of the body in the grave—Various instances of death-trance—The risk of premature interment considered—The Vampyr visit.

In acknowledging my former letter, you express an eager desire to learn, as you phrase it, “all about Vampyrs, if there ever were such things.” I will not delay satisfying your curiosity, although by so doing I interrupt the logical order of my communications. It is, perhaps, all the better. The proper place of this subject falls in the midst of a philosophical disquisition; and it would have been a pity not to present it to you in its pristine colouring. But how came your late tutor, Mr. H., to leave you in ignorance upon a point on which, in my time, schoolboys much your juniors entertained decided opinions?

Were there ever such things as Vampyrs? _Tantamne rem tam negligenter!_ I turn to the learned pages of Horst for a luminous and precise definition of the destructive and mysterious beings whose existence you have ventured to consider problematical.

“A Vampyr is a dead body which continues to live in the grave; which it leaves, however, by night, for the purpose of sucking the blood of the living, whereby it is nourished and preserved in good condition, instead of being decomposed like other dead bodies.”

Upon my word, you really deserve, since Mr. George Combe has clearly shown, in his admirable work on the Constitution of Man, and its adaptation to the surrounding world, that ignorance is a statutable crime before nature, and punished by the laws of Providence—you deserve, I say, unless you contrive to make Mr. H. your substitute, which I think would be just, yourself to be the subject of the nocturnal visit of a Vampyr. Your skepticism will abate pretty considerably when you see him stealthily entering your room, yet are powerless under the fascination of his fixed and leaden eye—when you are conscious, as you lie motionless with terror, of his nearer and nearer approach—when you feel his face, fresh with the smell of the grave, bent over your throat, while his keen teeth make a fine incision in your jugular, preparatory to his commencing his plain but nutritive repast.

You would look a little paler the next morning, but that would be all for the moment; for Fischer informs us that the bite of a Vampyr leaves in general no mark upon the person. But he fearfully adds, “it (the bite) is nevertheless speedily fatal,” unless the bitten person protect himself by eating some of the earth from the grave of the Vampyr, and smearing himself with his blood. Unfortunately, indeed, these measures are seldom, if ever, of more than temporary use. Fischer adds, “if through these precautions the life of the victim be prolonged for a period, sooner or later he ends with becoming a Vampyr himself; that is to say, he dies and is buried, but continues to lead a Vampyr life in the grave, nourishing himself by infecting others, and promiscuously propagating Vampirism.”

This is no romancer's dream. It is a succinct account of a superstition which to this day services in the east of Europe, where little more than a century ago it was frightfully prevalent. At that period Vampirism spread like a pestilence through Servia and Wallachia, causing numerous deaths, and disturbing all the land with fear of the mysterious visitation, against which no one felt himself secure.

Here is something like a good, solid, practical popular delusion. Do I believe it? To be sure I do. The facts are matter of history: the people died like rotted sheep; and the cause and method of their dying was, in their belief, what has just been stated. You suppose, then, they died frightened out of their lives, as men have died whose pardon has been proclaimed when their necks were already on the block, of the belief that they were going to die? Well, if that were all, the subject would still be worth examining. But there is more in it than that, as the following o'er true tale will convince you, the essential points of which are authenticated by documentary evidence.

In the spring of 1727, there returned from the Levant to the village of Meduegna, near Belgrade, one Arnod Paole, who, in a few years of military service and varied adventure, had amassed enough to purchase a cottage and an acre or two of land in his native place, where he gave out that he meant to pass the remainder of his days. He kept his word. Arnod had yet scarcely reached the prime of manhood; and though he must have encountered the rough as well as the smooth of life, and have mingled with many a wild and reckless companion, yet his naturally good disposition and honest principles had preserved him unscathed in the scenes he had passed through. At all events, such were the thoughts expressed by his neighbours as they discussed his return and settlement among them in the Stube of the village Hof. Nor did the frank and open countenance of Arnod, his obliging habits and steady conduct, argue their judgment incorrect. Nevertheless, there was something occasionally noticeable in his ways—a look and tone that betrayed inward disquiet. Often would he refuse to join his friends, or on some sudden plea abruptly quit their society. And he still more unaccountably, and as it seemed systematically, avoided meeting his pretty neighbour Nina, whose father occupied the next tenement to his own. At the age of seventeen, Nina was as charming a picture of youth, cheerfulness, innocence, and confidence, as you could have seen in all the world. You could not look into her limpid eyes, which steadily returned your gaze, without seeing to the bottom of the pure and transparent spring of her thoughts. Why, then, did Arnod shrink from meeting her? He was young; had a little property; had health and industry; and he had told his friends he had formed no ties in other lands. Why, then, did he avoid the fascination of the pretty Nina, who seemed a being made to chase from any brow the clouds of gathering care? But he did so; yet less and less resolutely, for he felt the charm of her presence. Who could have done otherwise? And how could he

long resist—he didn’t—the impulse of his fondness for the innocent girl who often sought to cheer his fits of depression?

And they were to be united—were betrothed; yet still an anxious gloom would fitfully overcast his countenance, even in the sunshine of those hours.

“What is it, dear Arnod, that makes you sad? It cannot be on my account, I know, for you were sad before you ever noticed me; and that, I think,” (and you should have seen the deepening rose upon her cheeks,) “surely first made me notice you.”

“Nina,” he answered, “I have done, I fear, a great wrong in trying to gain your affections. Nina, I have a fixed impression that I shall not live; yet, knowing this, I have selfishly made my existence necessary to your happiness.”

“How strangely you talk, dear Arnod! Who in the village is stronger and healthier than you? You feared no danger when you were a soldier. What danger do you fear as a villager of Meduegna?”

“It haunts me, Nina.”

“But, Arnod, you were sad before you thought of me. Did you then fear to die?”

“Ah, Nina, it is something worse than death.” And his vigorous frame shook with agony.

“Arnod, I conjure you, tell me.”

“It was in Cossova this fate befell me. Here you have hitherto escaped the terrible scourge. But there they died, and the dead visited the living. I experienced the first frightful visitation, and I fled; but not till I had sought his grave, and exacted the dread expiation from the Vampyr.”

Nina’s blood ran cold. She stood horror-stricken. But her young heart soon mastered her first despair. With a touching voice she spoke—

“Fear not, dear Arnod; fear not now. I will be your shield, or I will die with you!”

And she encircled his neck with her gentle arms, and returning hope shone, Iris-like, amid her falling tears. Afterwards they found a reasonable ground for banishing or allaying their apprehension in the length of time which had elapsed since Arnod left Cossova, during which no fearful visitant had again approached him; and they fondly trusted _that_ gave them security.

It is a strange world. The ills we fear are commonly not those which overwhelm us. The blows that reach us are for the most part unforeseen. One day, about a week after this conversation, Arnod missed his footing when on the top of a loaded hay-wagon, and fell from it to the ground. He was picked up insensible, and carried home, where, after lingering a short time, he died. His interment, as usual, followed immediately. His fate was sad and premature. But what pencil could paint Nina's grief!

Twenty or thirty days after his decease, says the perfectly authenticated report of these transactions, several of the neighbourhood complained that they were haunted by the deceased Arnod; and, what was more to the purpose, four of them died. The evil, looked at skeptically, was bad enough, but aggravated by the suggestions of superstition, it spread a panic through the whole district. To allay the popular terror, and if possible to get at the root of the evil, a determination was come to publicly to disinter the body of Arnod, with the view of ascertaining whether he really was a Vampyr, and, in that event, of treating him conformably. The day fixed for this proceeding was the fortieth after his burial.

It was on a gray morning in early August that the commission visited the quiet cemetery of Meduegna, which, surrounded with a wall of unhewn stone, lies sheltered by the mountain that, rising in undulating green slopes, irregularly planted with fruit trees, ends in an abrupt craggy ridge, feathered with underwood. The graves were, for the most part, neatly kept, with borders of box, or something like it, and flowers between; and at the head of most a small wooden cross, painted black, bearing the name of the tenant. Here and there a stone had been raised. One of considerable height, a single narrow slab, ornamented with grotesque Gothic carvings, dominated over the rest. Near this lay the grave of Arnod Paole, towards which the party moved. The work of throwing out the earth was begun by the gray, crooked old sexton, who lived in the Leichenhaus, beyond the great crucifix. He seemed unconcerned enough; no Vampyr would think of extracting a supper out of him. Nearest the grave stood two military surgeons, or feldscherers, from Belgrade, and a drummer-boy, who held their case of instruments. The boy looked on with keen interest; and when the coffin was exposed and rather roughly drawn out of the grave, his pale face and bright intent eye showed how the scene moved him. The sexton lifted the lid of the coffin: the body had become inclined to one side. Then turning it straight, "Ha! ha!" said he, pointing to fresh blood upon the lips—"Ha! ha! What! Your mouth not wiped since last night's work?" The spectators shuddered; the drummer-boy sank forward, fainting, and upset the instrument-case, scattering its contents; the senior surgeon, infected with the horror of the scene, repressed a hasty exclamation, and simply crossed himself. They threw water on the drummer-boy, and he recovered, but would not leave the spot. Then they inspected the body of Arnod. It looked as if it had not been dead a day. On handling it, the scarf-skin

came off, but below were new skin and new nails! How could they have come there but from its foul feeding! The case was clear enough; there lay before them the thing they dreaded—the Vampyr. So, without more ado, they simply drove a stake through poor Arnod's chest, whereupon a quantity of blood gushed forth, and the corpse uttered an audible groan. "Murder! oh, murder!" shrieked the drummer-boy, as he rushed wildly, with convulsed gestures, from the cemetery.

The drummer-boy was not far from the mark. But, quitting the romancing vein, which had led me to try and restore the original colours of the picture, let me confine myself, in describing the rest of the scene and what followed, to the words of my authority.

The body of Arnod was then burnt to ashes, which were returned to the grave. The authorities further staked and burnt the bodies of the four others which were supposed to have been infected by Arnod. No mention is made of the state in which they were found. The adoption of these decisive measures failed, however, entirely to extinguish the evil, which continued still to hang about the village. About five years afterwards it had again become very rife, and many died through it; whereupon the authorities determined to make another and a complete clearance of the Vampyrs in the cemetery, and with that object they had all the graves, to which present suspicion attached, opened, and their contents officially anatomized, of which procedure the following is the medical report, here and there abridged only:—

1. A woman of the name of Stana, twenty years of age, who had died three months before of a three days' illness following her confinement. She had before her death avowed that she had anointed herself with the blood of a Vampyr, to liberate herself from his persecution. Nevertheless, she, as well as her infant, whose body through careless interment had been half eaten by the dogs, had died. Her body was entirely free from decomposition. On opening it, the chest was found full of recently effused blood, and the bowels had exactly the appearances of sound health. The skin and nails of her hands and feet were loose and came off, but underneath lay new skin and nails.
2. A woman of the name of Miliza, who had died at the end of a three months' illness. The body had been buried ninety and odd days. In the chest was liquid blood. The viscera were as in the former instance. The body was declared by a heyduk, who recognised it, to be in better condition, and fatter, than it had been in the woman's legitimate lifetime.
3. The body of a child eight years old, that had likewise been buried ninety days: it was in the Vampyr condition.
4. The son of a heyduk named Milloc, sixteen years old. The body had lain in the grave nine weeks. He had died after three days'

indisposition, and was in the condition of a Vampyr.

5. Joachim, likewise son of a heyduk, seventeen years old. He had died after three days' illness; had been buried eight weeks and some days; was found in the Vampyr state.

6. A woman of the name of Rusha, who had died of an illness of ten days' duration, and had been six weeks buried, in whom likewise fresh blood was found in the chest.

(The reader will understand, that to _see_ blood in the chest, it is first necessary to _cut_ the chest open.)

7. The body of a girl of ten years of age, who had died two months before. It was likewise in the Vampyr state, perfectly undecomposed, with blood in the chest.

8. The body of the wife of one Hadnuck, buried seven weeks before; and that of her infant, eight weeks old, buried only twenty-one days. They were both in a state of decomposition, though buried in the same ground, and closely adjoining the others.

9. A servant, by name Rhade, twenty-three years of age; he had died after an illness of three months' duration, and the body had been buried five weeks. It was in a state of decomposition.

10. The body of the heyduk Stanco, sixty years of age, who had died six weeks previously. There was much blood and other fluid in the chest and abdomen, and the body was in the Vampyr condition.

11. Millac, a heyduk, twenty-five years old. The body had been in the earth six weeks. It was perfectly in the Vampyr condition.

12. Stanjoika, the wife of a heyduk, twenty years old; had died after an illness of three days, and had been buried eighteen. The countenance was florid. There was blood in the chest and in the heart. The viscera were perfectly sound; the skin remarkably fresh.

The document which gives the above particulars is signed by three regimental surgeons, and formally countersigned by a lieutenant-colonel and sub-lieutenant. It bears the date of "June 7, 1732, Meduegna near Belgrade." No doubt can be entertained of its authenticity, or of its _general_ fidelity; the less that it does not stand alone, but is supported by a mass of evidence to the same effect. It appears to establish, beyond question, that where the fear of Vampirism prevails, and there occur several deaths, in the popular belief connected with it, the bodies, when disinterred weeks after burial, present the appearance of corpses from which life has only recently departed.

What inference shall we draw from this fact?—that Vampirism is true in the popular sense?—and that these fresh-looking and well-conditioned corpses had some mysterious source of preternatural nourishment? That would be to adopt, not to solve the superstition. Let us content ourselves with a notion not so monstrous, but still startling enough: that the bodies, which were found in the so-called Vampyr state, instead of being in a new or mystical condition, were simply alive in the common way, or had been so for some time subsequent to their interment; that, in short, they were the bodies of persons who had been buried alive, and whose life, where it yet lingered, was finally extinguished through the ignorance and barbarity of those who disinterred them. In the following sketch of a similar scene to that above described, the correctness of this inference comes out with terrific force.

Erasmus Francisci, in his remarks upon the description of the Dukedom of Krain by Valvasor, speaks of a man of the name of Grando, in the district of Kring, who died, was buried, and became a Vampyr, and as such was exhumed for the purpose of having a stake thrust through him.

“When they opened his grave, after he had been long buried, his face was found with a colour, and his features made natural sorts of movements, as if the dead man smiled. He even opened his mouth as if he would inhale fresh air. They held the crucifix before him, and called in a loud voice, ‘See, this is Jesus Christ who redeemed your soul from hell, and died for you.’ After the sound had acted on his organs of hearing, and he had connected perhaps some ideas with it, tears began to flow from the dead man’s eyes. Finally, when after a short prayer for his poor soul, they proceeded to hack off his head, the corpse uttered a screech, and turned and rolled just as if it had been alive—and the grave was full of blood.”

We have thus succeeded in interpreting one of the unknown terms in the Vampyr theorem. The suspicious character, who had some dark way of nourishing himself in the grave, turns out to be an unfortunate gentleman (or lady) whom his friends had buried under a mistake while he was still alive, and who, if they afterwards mercifully let him alone, died sooner or later either naturally or of the premature interment—in either case, it is to be hoped, with no interval of restored consciousness. The state which thus passed for death and led to such fatal consequences, apart from superstition, deserves our serious consideration; for, although of very rare, it is of continual occurrence, and society is not sufficiently on its guard against a contingency so dreadful when overlooked. When the nurse or the doctor has announced that all is over—that the valued friend or relative has breathed his last—no doubt crosses any one’s mind of the reality of the sad event. Disease is now so well understood—every step in its march laid down and foreseen—the approach of danger accurately estimated—the liability of the patient, according to his powers of resisting it, to

succumb earlier or to hold out longer—all is theoretically so clear that a wholesome suspicion of error in the verdict of the attendants seldom suggests itself. The evil I am considering ought not, however, to be attributed to redundancy of knowledge: it arises from its partial lack—from a too general neglect of one very important section in pathological science. The laity, if not the doctors too, constantly lose sight of the fact, that there exists an alternative to the fatal event of ordinary disease; that a patient is liable at any period of illness to deviate, or, as it were, to slide off, from the customary line of disease into another and a deceptive route—_instead of death, to encounter apparent death_.

The Germans express this condition of the living body by the term “scheintod,” which signifies exactly _apparent death_; and it is perhaps a better term than our English equivalent, “suspended animation.” But both these expressions are generic terms, and a specific term is still wanted to denote the present class of instances. To meet this exigency, I propose, for reasons which will afterwards appear, to employ the term “death-trance” to designate the cases we are investigating.

Death-trance is, then, one of the forms of suspended animation: there are several others. After incomplete poisoning, after suffocation in either of its various ways, after exposure to cold in infants newly born, a state is occasionally met with, of which (however each may still differ from the rest) the common feature is an apparent suspension of the vital actions. But all of these so-cited instances agree in another important respect, which second inter-agreement separates them as a class from death-trance. They represent, each and all, a period of conflict between the effects of certain deleterious impressions and the vital principle, the latter struggling against the weight and force of the former. Such is not the case in death-trance.

Death-trance is a positive status—a period of repose—the duration of which is sometimes definite and predetermined, though unknown. Thus the patient, the term of the death-trance having expired, occasionally suddenly wakes, entirely and at once restored. Oftener, however, the machinery which has been stopped seems to require to be jogged—then it goes on again.

The basis of death-trance is suspension of the action of the heart, and of the breathing, and of voluntary motion; generally likewise feeling and intelligence, and the vegetative changes in the body, are suspended. With these phenomena is joined loss of external warmth; so that the usual evidence of life is gone. But there have occurred varieties of this condition, in which occasional slight manifestations of one or other of the vital actions have been observed.

Death-trance may occur as a primary affection, suddenly or gradually.

The diseases the course of which it is liable, as it were, to bifurcate, or to graft itself upon, are first and principally all disorders of the nervous system. But in any form of disease, when the body is brought to a certain degree of debility, death-trance may supervene. Age and sex have to do with its occurrence; which is more frequent in the young than in the old, in women than in men—differences evidently connected with greater irritability of the nervous system. Accordingly, women in labour are among the most liable to death-trance, and it is from such a case that I will give a first instance of the affection as portrayed by a medical witness. (*Journal des Savans*, 1749.)

M. Rigaudeau, surgeon to the military hospital, and licensed accoucher at Douai, was sent for on the 8th of September, 1745, to attend the wife of Francis Dumont, residing two leagues from the town. He was late in getting there; it was half-past eight, A. M.—too late, it seemed; the patient was declared to have died at six o'clock, after eighteen hours of ineffectual labour-pains. M. Rigaudeau inspected the body; there was no pulse or breath; the mouth was full of froth, the abdomen tumid. He brought away the infant, which he committed to the care of the nurses, who, after trying to reanimate it for three hours, gave up the attempt, and prepared to lay it out, when it opened its mouth. They then gave it wine, and it was speedily recovered. M. Rigaudeau, who returned to the house as this occurred, inspected again the body of the mother. (It had been already nailed down in a coffin.) He examined it with the utmost care; but he came to the conclusion that it was certainly dead. Nevertheless, as the joints of the limbs were still flexible, although seven hours had elapsed since its apparent death, he left the strictest injunctions to watch the body carefully, to apply stimulants to the nostrils from time to time, to slap the palms of the hands, and the like. At half-past three o'clock symptoms of returning animation showed themselves, and the patient recovered.

The period during which every ordinary sign of life may be absent, without the prevention of their return, is unknown, but in well-authenticated cases it has much exceeded the period observed in the above instance. Here is an example borrowed from the *Journal des Savans*, 1741.

There was a Colonel Russell, whose wife, to whom he was affectionately attached, died, or appeared to do so. But he would not allow the body to be buried; and threatened to shoot any one who should interfere to remove it for that purpose. His conduct was guided by reason as well as by affection and instinct. He said he would not part from the body till its decomposition had begun. Eight days had passed, during which the body of his wife gave no sign of life: when, as he sat bedewing her hand with his tears, the church-bell tolled, and, to his unspeakable amazement, his wife sat up and said—"That is the last bell; we shall be too late." She recovered.

There are cases on record of persons, who could spontaneously fall into death-trance. Monti, in a letter to Haller, adverts to several; and mentions, in particular, a peasant upon whom, when he assumed this state, the flies would settle; breathing, the pulse, and all ordinary signs of life disappeared. A priest of the name of Cælius Rhodaginus had the same faculty. But the most celebrated instance is that of Colonel Townshend, mentioned in the surgical works of Gooch, by whom and by Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Baynard, and by Mr. Shrine, an apothecary, the performance of Colonel Townshend was seen and attested. They had long attended him, for he was an habitual invalid, and he had often invited them to witness the phenomenon of his dying and coming to life again; but they had hitherto refused, from fear of the consequences to himself: at last they assented. Accordingly, in their presence, Colonel Townshend laid himself down on his back, and Dr. Cheyne undertook to observe his pulse; Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Shrine had a looking-glass to hold to his mouth. After a few seconds, pulse, breathing, and the action of the heart, were no longer to be observed. Each of the witnesses satisfied himself of the entire cessation of these phenomena. When the death-trance had lasted half-an-hour, the doctors began to fear that their patient had pushed the experiment too far, and was dead in earnest; and they were preparing to leave the house, when a slight movement of the body attracted their attention. They renewed their routine of observation; when the pulse and sensible motion of the heart gradually returned, and breathing, and consciousness. The tale ends abruptly. Colonel Townshend, on recovering, sent for his attorney, made his will, and died, for good and all, six hours afterwards.

Although many have recovered from death-trance, and there seems to be in each case a definite period to its duration, yet its event is not always so fortunate. The patient sometimes really dies during its continuance, either unavoidably, or in consequence of adequate measures not being taken to stimulate him to waken, or to support life. The following very good instance rests on the authority of Dr. Schmidt, a physician of the hospital of Paderborn, where it occurred, (*Rheinisch-Westphälischer Anzeiger*, 1835, No. 57 and 58.)

A young man of the name of Caspar Kreite, from Berne, died in the hospital of Paderborn, but his body could not be interred for three weeks, for the following reasons. During the first twenty-four hours after drawing its last breath, the corpse opened its eyes, and the pulse could be felt, for a few minutes, beating feebly and irregularly. On the third and fourth day, points of the skin, which had been burned to test the reality of his death, suppurated. On the fifth day the corpse changed the position of one hand: on the ninth day a vesicular eruption appeared on the back. For nine days there was a vertical fold of the skin of the forehead—a sort of frown—and the features had not the character of death. The lips remained red till the eighteenth

day; and the joints preserved their flexibility from first to last. He lay in this state in a warm room for nineteen days, without any farther alteration than a sensible wasting in flesh. Till after the nineteenth day no discoloration of the body, or odour of putrefaction, was observed. He had been cured of ague, and laboured under a slight chest affection; but there had been no adequate cause for his death. It is evident that this person was much more alive than many are in the death-trance; and one half suspects that stimulants and nourishment, properly introduced, might have entirely reanimated him.

I might exemplify death-trance by many a well authenticated romantic story.—A noise heard in a vault; the people, instead of breaking open the door, go for the keys, and for authority to act, and return too late; the unfortunate person is found dead, having previously gnawn her hand and arm in agony.—A lady is buried with a jewel of value on her finger; thieves open the vault to possess themselves of the treasure; the ring cannot be drawn from the finger, and the thieves proceed to cut the finger off; the lady, wakening from her trance, scares the thieves away, and recovers.—A young married lady dies and is buried; a former admirer, to whom her parents had refused her hand, bribes the sexton to let him see once more the form he loved. The body opportunely comes to life at this moment, and flies from Paris with its first lover to England, where they are married. Venturing to return to France, the lady is recognised, and is reclaimed by her previous husband through a suit at law; her counsel demurs, on the ground of the desertion and burial; but the law not admitting this plea, she flies again to England with her preserver, to avoid the judgment of the parliament of Paris, in the acts of which the case stands recorded. There are one or two other cases that I dare not cite, the particulars of which transcend the wildest flights of imagination.

It may be thought that these are all tales of the olden time; and that the very case I have given from the hospital at Paderborn shows that now medical men are sufficiently circumspect, and the public really on its guard to prevent a living person being interred as one dead. And I grant that in England, among all but the poorest class, the danger is practically inconsiderable of being buried alive. But that it still exists for every class, and that for the poor the danger is great and serious, I am afraid there is too much reason for believing. It is stated in Froriep's *_Notizen_*, 1829, No. 522, that, agreeably to a then recent ordinance in New York, coffins presented for burial were kept above ground eight days, open at the head, and so arranged, that the least movement of the body would ring a bell, through strings attached to the hands and feet. It will hardly be credited, that *_out of twelve hundred_* whose interment had been thus postponed, *_six returned to life_*—one in every two hundred! The arrangement thus beneficently adopted at New York is, however, imperfect, as it makes time the criterion for interment. The time is *_not_* known during which a body in death-trance may remain alive. Nothing but one positive condition

of the body, which I will presently mention, authenticates death. It is frightful to think how, in the south of Europe, within twenty-four hours after the last breath bodies are shovelled into pits among heaped corpses; and to imagine what fearful agonies of despair must sometimes be encountered by unhappy beings, who wake amid the unutterable horrors of such a grave. But it is enough to look at home, and to make no delay in providing there for the careful watching of the bodies of the poor, till life has certainly departed. Many do not dream how barbarous and backward the vaunted nineteenth century will appear to posterity!

But there is another danger to which society is obnoxious through not making sufficient account of the contingency of death-trance, that appears to me more urgent and menacing than even the risk of being buried alive.

The danger I advert to is not this; but this is something—

The Cardinal Espinosa, prime minister under Philip the Second of Spain, died, as it was supposed, after a short illness. His rank entitled him to be embalmed. Accordingly, the body was opened for that purpose. The lungs and heart had just been brought into view, when the latter was seen to beat. The cardinal awakening at the fatal moment, had still strength enough left to seize with his hand the knife of the anatomist!

But it is this—

On the 23d of September, 1763, the Abbé Prevost, the French novelist and compiler of travels, was seized with a fit in the forest of Chantilly. The body was found, and conveyed to the residence of the nearest clergyman. It was supposed that death had taken place through apoplexy. But the local authorities, desiring to be satisfied of the fact, ordered the body to be examined. During the process, the poor abbé uttered a cry of agony.—It was too late.

It is to be observed that cases of sudden and unexplained death are, on the one hand, the cases most likely to furnish a large percentage of death-trance; and, on the other, are just those in which the anxiety of friends or the over-zealousness of a coroner is liable to lead to premature anatomization. Nor does it even follow that, because the body happily did not wake while being dissected, the spark of life was therefore extinct. This view, however, is too painful to be followed out in reference to the past. But it imperatively suggests the necessity of forbidding necroscopic examinations, before there is perfect evidence that life has departed—that is, of extending to this practice the rule which ought to be made absolute in reference to interment.

Thus comes out the practical importance of the question, how is it to be known that the body is no longer alive?

The entire absence of the ordinary signs of life is insufficient to prove the absence of life. The body may be externally cold; the pulse not be felt; breathing may have ceased; no bodily motion may occur; the limbs may be stiff (through spasm); the sphincter muscles relaxed; no blood may flow from an opened vein; the eyes may have become glassy; there may be partial mortification to offend the sense with the smell of death; and yet the body may be alive.

The only security we at present know of, that life has left the body, is the supervention of chemical decomposition, shown in commencing change of colour of the integuments of the abdomen and throat to blue and green, and an attendant cadaverous feter.

To return from this important digression to the former subject of the Vampyr superstition. The second element which we have yet to explain is the Vampyr visit and its consequence—the lapse of the party visited into death-trance. There are two ways of dealing with this knot; one is to cut it, the other to untie it.

It may be cut, by denying the supposed connexion between the Vampyr visit and the supervention of death-trance in the second party. Nor is the explanation thus obtained devoid of plausibility. There is no reason why death-trance should not, in certain seasons and places, be epidemic. Then the persons most liable to it would be those of weak and irritable nervous systems. Again, a first effect of the epidemic might be further to shake the nerves of weaker subjects. These are exactly the persons who are likely to be infected with imaginary terrors, and to dream, or even to fancy, they have seen Mr. or Mrs. such a one, the last victims of the epidemic. The dream or impression upon the senses might again recur, and the sickening patient have already talked of it to his neighbours, before he himself was seized with death-trance. On this supposition, the Vampyr visit would sink into the subordinate rank of a mere premonitory symptom.

To myself, I must confess, this explanation, the best I am yet in a position to offer, appears barren and jejune; and not at all to do justice to the force and frequency, or, as tradition represents the matter, the universality of the Vampyr visit as a precursor of the victim's fate. Imagine how strong must have been the conviction of the reality of the apparition, how common a feature it must have been, to have led to the laying down of the unnatural and repulsive process customarily followed at the Vampyr's grave, as the regular and proper preventive of ulterior consequences.

I am disposed, therefore, rather to try and untie this knot, and with that object to wait, hoping that something may turn up in the progress of these inquiries to assist me in its solution. In the mean time, I would beg leave to consider this second half of the problem a compound

phenomenon, the solutions of the two parts of which may not emerge simultaneously. The Vampyr visit is one thing; its presumed contagious effect another.

The Vampyr visit! Well, it is clear the Vampyr could not have left his grave bodily—or, at all events, if he could, he never could have buried himself again. Yet in his grave they always found him. So the body could not have been the visitant. Then, in popular language, it was the ghost of the Vampyr that haunted its future victim. The ghostly nature of the visitant could not have been identified at a luckier moment. The very subject which I next propose to undertake is the analysis of ghosts. I have, therefore, only to throw the Vampyr ghost into the crucible with the rest; and to-morrow I may perhaps be able to report the rational composition of the whole batch.



A Gravedigger Scene

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Mad Shepherds*, by L. P. Jacks

It was Sunday evening, and the congregation had dispersed. I was making my way into the church to take a last look at a famous fourteenth-century tomb. Not a soul was visible; but the sound of a pick and the sight of fresh earth announced that the sexton was at work digging a grave. I walked to the spot. A bald head, the shining top of which was now level with the surface of the ground, raised the hope that he would prove to be a sexton of the old school. I was not disappointed.

"Good evening," I said.

"A good evening to you, sir," said the sexton, pausing in his work with the air of a man who welcomed an excuse to rest.

"And whose grave is that you're digging?" I asked.

"Old Sally Bloxham--mother to Tom Bloxham--him as keeps the 'Spotted Pig.' And a bad job for him as she's gone. If it hadn't been for old Sally he'd ha' drunk hisself to death long ago. And who may you be?" he asked, as though realising that this sudden burst of confidential

information was somewhat rash.

"Oh, I'm nobody in particular. Just passing through and taking a look around."

"Ah! there's lots as comes lookin' round, nowadays. More than there used to be. Why, bless your life, I remember the time when you nivver seed a soul in this village except the home-dwellers. And now there's bicycles and motor cars almost every day. Most on 'em just pokes their noses round, and then off they goes. Some wants to see the tomb inside, and then there's a big stone over an old doorway at the back o' the church, what they calls "Arrowing o' 'Ell,' though I don't know what it means. You've 'eard on it? Well, I suppose it's something wonderful; but I could nivver see no 'Arrow and no 'Ell."

"I'll tell you what, sexton," I said, noticing some obviously human bones in the earth at his graveside, "this churchyard needs a bit of new ground."

"Ye're right there," said he, "it's needed that a good many years. But we can't get no new ground. Old Bob Cromwell as owns the lands on that side won't sell, and Lord ---- won't give, so wot are yer to do? Why, I do believe as there's hundreds and thousands of people buried in this little churchyard. It's a big parish, too, and they've been burying their dead here since nobody knows when. Bones? Why, in some parts there's almost as much bones as there is clay. Yer puts in one, and yer digs up two: that's about what it comes to. I sometimes says to my missis, 'I wonder who they'll dig up to make room for me.' 'Yes,' she says, 'and I wonder who you'll be dug up to make room for.' It's scandalous, that's what I says."

"But does the law allow you to disturb these old graves?"

"It does when they're old enough. But you can't be over particular in a place no bigger than this. Of course, we're a bit careful like. But ask no questions, and I'll tell yer no lies."

"But this grave you're digging now; how long is it since the last interment was made in the same ground?"

"Well, that's a pretty straight 'un. That's what I call coming to the point!--Thank 'ee, sir--and good luck to you and yours!--However, since you seem a plain-dealing gentleman I'll tell you summat as I wouldn't tell everybody. You poke your stick about in that soil over there, and you'll find some bits as belonged to Sam Wiggin's grandfather on his mother's side." (I poked my stick as directed.) "That's his tooth you've got now; but I won't swear to it, as things had got a bit mixed, no doubt, afore they put him in. Wait a bit, though. What's under that big lump at the end o' my spade?" (He reached out his spade and touched a

clod; I turned it over and revealed the thing it hid: he examined it carefully.) "You see, you can generally tell after a bit o' practice what belongs to what. Putting two and two together--what with them bones coming up so regular, and that bit o' coffin furniture right on the top on 'em--I reckon we've struck 'im much as he was put down in '62."

"Are none of his relatives living?" I asked.

"Why, yes, of course they're living. Didn't I tell yer he was grandfather to Sam Wiggin--that's 'im as farms the Leasowes at t'other end of the village. What'll he say?--why, nothing o' course. Them as sees nothing, says nothing."

"But," I said, "if Sam comes to church next Sunday he'll see his grandfather's bones sticking out all over this grave."

"Ow's 'e to know they're his grandfather's? There's no name on 'em," said the sexton.

"But surely he will remember that his grandfather was buried in this spot."

"Not 'im! 'E don't bother 'is 'ead about grandfathers. Sam Wiggin! Doesn't know 'e ever had a grandfather. Somebody else might take it up? Not in this parish. Besides, we've all got used to it. Folks here is all mixed up wi' one another while they're living, so they don't mind gettin' a bit mixed up when they're dead."

"But is the parson used to it along with the rest of you?"

"Well, yer see, I allus clears up before he comes to bury--ribs and shins and big 'un's as won't break up. Skulls breaks up easy; you just catches them a snope with yer spade, and they splits up down the joinin'. Week afore last I dug up two beauties under that yew; anybody might a' kep' 'em for a museum. I've knowed them as would ha' done it, and sold 'em for eighteenpence apiece. But I couldn't bring my mind to it."

"So you just broke them up, I suppose?"

"No, I didn't. One on 'em belonged to a man as I once knowed; leastways I remember him as a young chap. He was underkeeper at the Hall. The young woman he wanted to marry wouldn't 'ave 'im, so he shot hisself wi' a rook gun. I knowed it was 'im by the 'ole in 'is 'ead, no bigger nor a pea. Just think o' that! No bigger nor a big pea, I tell yer, and as round as if it had been done wi' a punch. I told my missis about it when I went 'ome to my tea. I says, 'Do yer remember 'Arry Pole, the young keeper in the old lord's time, what shot hisself over that affair wi' Polly Towers?' 'Remember 'im?' she says. 'Why, I used to go out walking

wi' 'im myself afore he took up wi' Polly.' 'I thought you did,' I says; 'well, there's 'is skull. See that little 'ole in it, clean as if it had been cut wi' a punch? He never shot hisself, not 'e!' Why, bless yer heart, doesn't it stand to sense that if 'e'd done it 'isself, he'd a'most ha' blowed 'is 'ead off, leastways made a 'ole a lot bigger nor that? And wot's more, there'd ha' been a 'ole on the other side, and there wasn't any sign o' one."

"But perhaps it wasn't 'Arry Pole's skull?"

"Yes, it was. Why, where's the sense of its not bein'? I remember his bein' buried as if it was yesterday, and I knowed the spot quite well. And do you think it likely that two men 'ud be put in the same grave both wi' rook bullets in their 'eads? If it wasn't 'Arry Pole, who was it?"

"But wasn't all this gone into at the inquest?"

"Well, you see, it's over forty years since it 'appened; but I can remember as the 'ole were looked into, and there was a good deal o' talk at the time. There was two men as said they seed him wi' the gun in his hand, and a mournful look on his face, like. And so, what wi' one thing and another, when they couldn't find who else had killed him, they give the verdict as he must ha' killed hisself. So, you see, they made it out some'ow. But you'll never make me believe 'e did it 'isself--not after I've seen that 'ole."

"I wonder who shot him," I said meditatively.

"Yes, and you'll 'ave to go on wondering till the Judgment Day. You'll find out then. All I can tell yer is that it wasn't me, and it wasn't Polly Towers. However, when I found his skull I didn't break it as I do wi' most on 'em. I just kep' it in a bag and put it back when I filled in the grave.

"But you were askin' me about Parson. Well, I telled him the state o' the churchyard when he come to the living. At first he took it pretty easy. 'Hide 'em as far as you can, Johnny,' he says to me. 'And remember there's this great consolation--they'll all be sorted out on the Judgment Day.'

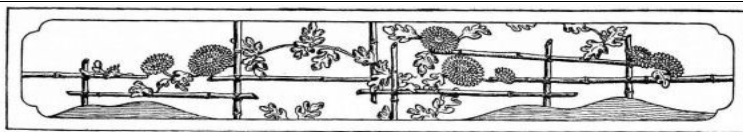
"But one day something 'appened as give Parson a pretty start. It was one of these chaps in motors, I reckon, as did it. I see him one Saturday night rootin' about the churchyard and lookin' behind them laurels where I used to pitch all the bits and bobs of bone as I see lying about. I've often wished I'd took the number on his motor, and then we'd ha' caught him fine! But he was a gentlemanly-looking young feller, and I didn't suspect nothing at the time.

"Well, next morning, when Parson comes to read the Service, what do you think he found? Why, there was a man's thigh-bone, large as life, stuck in the middle of the big Prayer-Book at the Psalms for the day. Then, when he opens the Bible to read the lessons, blessed if there wasn't a coffin-plate, worn as thin as a sheet of paper, marking the place, Then he goes into the pulpit, and the first thing he sees was a jawbone full of teeth lyin' on the cushion; there was ribs in the book-rack; there was a tooth in his glass of water; there was bones everywhere--you never see such a sight in all yer life! The young man must ha' taken a basketful into the church. Some he put into the pews, some into the collectin' boxes, some under the cushions--you never knew where you were going to find 'em next!"

"That was a blackguardly thing to do," I said. "The man who did it deserves the cat."

"So he does," said Johnny. "But I can tell yer, it's made us more partikler ever since. Everything behind them laurel bushes was cleared out and buried next day, and, my eye, you wouldn't believe what a lot there was! Barrer-loads!

"I'm told that when Lord ----, up at the Hall, heard on it, he nearly killed hisself wi' laughin'. There's some folks"--here Johnny lowered his voice--"there's some folks _as thinks that his lordship 'ad a 'and in it hisself_. Some says it was one of them wild chaps as 'e's allus got staying with him. That's more likely, in my opinion. But it wouldn't surprise me, just between you and me, to hear some day that his lordship was going to give us a bit o' new ground."



The Vampire Cat

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Vampire Cat*, by Gerard Van Etten

A PLAY IN ONE ACT FROM
THE JAPANESE LEGEND
OF
THE NABESHIMA CAT

BY
GERARD VAN ETTEN

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PRINCE HIZEN, LORD OF NABESHIMA....
BUZEN, HIS CHIEF COUNCILLOR.....
RUITEN, A PRIEST.....
ITO SODA, A COMMON SOLDIER.....
KASHIKU, A MAID.....
O TOYO, WIFE OF THE PRINCE.....

TIME: Medieval Japan.

SCENE: The room of O Toyo in the palace.

TIME OF ACTION: Between 10 and 12 p.m.

NOTE.--According to the old Japanese legend, the soul of a cat can enter a human being.

THE VAMPIRE CAT

SCENE. _ At R. is a dressing table, upon it a steel mirror, toilet articles, and two lighted candles with ornate shades. R. U. a section of shoji leads to another room, this section is now closed. At R. C. a large section of shoji is open, giving a view of the garden. To the R. of this entrance is a small shrine and Buddha. At L. of the room is a sleeping mat and head rest. By the head rest a lantern, now unlighted. Down L. is an open section of shoji leading to the _ PRINCE'S _ apartments. Just above it stands a screen. As the curtain rises the _ PRINCE _ is standing R. C. looking out into the garden. _ RUITEN _ is down R. and _ BUZEN _ slightly above him. _ BUZEN _ crosses L. _

PRINCE. [_ Comes down between _ RUITEN _ and _ BUZEN.]

Settle for me tonight
My sicknesses and my fears--
[_ To_ BUZEN.] Settle them for me,
Sir Buzen, councillor crafty.
[_ To_ RUITEN.] Settle them for me,
Priest Ruiten, the prayerful.

RUITEN. So are we trying in all ways
Thy pain to relieve
Yet nought seems availing.

PRINCE. Wracked is my body
With tortures unending
Born of the dreams
That are surging forever
Backward and forward
Thru my brain, weary.

BUZEN. [_ Indicating door L. _] Around thy bed each night
Have I placed thy samurai
In number one hundred
To guard thy sleep--

RUITEN. Zealously have I prayed
In the temple called "Miyo In,"
And during the night hours
Have knelt at thy house shrine
Praying to Buddha, the lord of the world.

PRINCE. Yet have I not slept
Entirely untortured.
Slow are thy prayers
In fruit bearing.

RUITEN. Slow because contending with evil--
[_ Approaches Prince. _]
With evil in form strange and subtle.
Over this house hangs a spirit
Ne'er resting and ready always for dire deeds.

PRINCE. Such a spirit there must be--but what?

RUITEN. Evil takes many forms but the form of a cat
Is favored by many devils.

PRINCE. [_ Startled, the others watch him closely. _] A cat--aye, truly
And if a cat stalked here
That evil thing must we kill.

RUITEN. Yet such is their power malignant
That they take other forms than the forms of cats--
Even human forms.

PRINCE. Ha!--And the spirit that visits me?
Mayhap that--
Only twice hath it failed of its visit.

BUZEN. And those lost visits, when?

PRINCE. The last two nights.

BUZEN. [_ Swelling with pride._] Then, oh Prince, the cure may
be found.
Better than prayers is the cure [_ Eyeing_ RUITEN.]
For prayers have not ears--have not eyes--
Have not weapons--better than prayers is it.

PRINCE. Tell me this cure. It is grudged, Sir Priest?

RUITEN. [_ Bowing._] A cure for my lord could not be grudged.

PRINCE. Well spoken. Say on, Sir Buzen.

BUZEN. First I must beg clemency
For thy hundred samurai
For faithful they are to the bone, yet--

PRINCE. Yet? Why clemency? For what?

BUZEN. On guard, they slept.

PRINCE. Slept?

BUZEN. Aye. Soundly as though deep in saki.

PRINCE. And none roused?

BUZEN. They were as dead
From shortly after the hour of ten
Until dawning.
Awakening they knew they had slept
Yet knew not when the poppy was thrown in their eyes.
Even as one man none knew
And were deep amazed and full of shame.
Each night it was the same.

PRINCE. [_ Angrily._] So, they slept.
While I, on my couch,

Through the hours writhed--
Writhed and twisted--
Weakening ever--
Not sleep, yet dreaming--
Oh, horrible dreams.

RUITEN. Of what were these horrible dreams?
What was their substance?

PRINCE. [_ Mystified at the memory. _] There would come a soft
stealing--
As of draperies hushed and lifted
For silence in walking;
Like soft, silken draperies
Wrapped about stealthy limbs.
Then a shape clothed for sleep
As women are clothed--
Sinuous and vague in movement,
Then taking form slowly--
The form--a lie!--a lie! [_ Covers his face and goes upstage. _]

RUITEN. The form?

PRINCE. [_ Turns. _] O Toyo!

RUITEN.

BUZEN. [_ Rubbing their hands. _] Ah!

PRINCE. [_ Comes down R. _, RUITEN _and_ BUZEN _are together a
little L. _]
Came she to me--
Leaned o'er me--
Caressed me
Yet soothed not.
Her lips to mine--
Her lips but not sweet.
Then here on my throat
Would she place them
And all my life seemed to smother--
Out of me flowed the life-blood
In a deep stream
Like a tide
Forced by the gods,
Against its will,
To flow far away and yet farther.

BUZEN. So does a vampire
Sucking her victim
Draw from him

His blood and his marrow.

PRINCE. Guard thy words!--
As my strength ebbed
She drew back
Red-lipped and smiling,
Smiling and laughing
Though her laughter was silent.
Then with a final shimmer
Of silent silks she vanished--
So was it done.

RUITEN. So always the dream?
If dream it were.

PRINCE. The dream--I think yet it was a dream--
So was it always.

BUZEN. But the last two nights?

PRINCE. Came she as usual
Flowing over the floor
Like a spectre enrobed
And beautified.
But as she bent o'er me
She paused as if startled
And, slowly gazing about,
Turned and was gone.
Last night she paused
As if speaking to someone
Though I could see no one.

BUZEN. But the cause of her turning?

RUITEN. Turned she startled--
Turned she slowly--
Turned she wonderingly?

PRINCE. Slowly, as if she felt
A strange presence.

RUITEN. Feared she?

PRINCE. She left me.

BUZEN. But trembling or calm?

PRINCE. Calmly, as from a thing hated
And more powerful than she

Whom she would not rouse to action.

BUZEN. [_ Rubbing his hands._] Good.

PRINCE. What is good?

BUZEN. That which thou speakest of.

PRINCE. How so?

BUZEN. [_ Comes forward towards the Prince._] It proves that I have
humbly succeeded--

[_ Grudgingly._] Through the help of another, 'tis true--
But yet succeeded in bringing my lord honorable help.

RUITEN. Indeed it is so.

PRINCE. Say on, very wise councillor.

BUZEN. [_ Puffing up._] Without more words than are fit
This then is the way of the cure.
When long had thine illness ravaged and worn thee
And many nights had you tossed by weird visions enthralled,
No cures affecting, no prayers availing thee [_ Glances at _ RUITEN.]
Then counselled I with thy wise ones--
And, too, with Priest Ruiten--

RUITEN. I, you should name first,
For without my prayers your wisdom was nought.

BUZEN. To continue briefly.
All our heads together brought no solution--

PRINCE. True, true.

BUZEN. [_ Bowing._] Humbly I acknowledge my head
Empty and brainless.
Yet even from idiots lips
Wisdom oft falls unexpected
And therefore more wonderful.
Now it is told in old tales
Of how Iyaiyasu met--

RUITEN. Short, abrupt is thy tale.

PRINCE. The cure, Sir Buzen,
The hour passes.

BUZEN. [_ Bowing._] I crave honorable leniency.

To be brief--

PRINCE. Aye, brief.

BUZEN. Discouraged and sick at heart
At the sufferings of my great lord,
I was retiring to my room
By way of the garden
And the hour was the Hour of the Fox.
I heard a splashing in the pool
And drawing near
Saw a young soldier washing.
I spoke to him asking,
"Who art thou?"
"Retainer to my Lord Nabeshima,
Prince of Hizen," he answered.
Then talked I with him. Of thy sickness
We talked. And he was ashamed of thy samurai's sleeping.
He begged to be allowed to guard thy sleep
Also for, being a common soldier, it was not permitted.
So earnestly talked he that I promised to consult
With the other councillors and see what could be done.
"So tell me your name, young sir," I said.
"Ito Soda is my name, honorable sir,
And for your kind words I thank you."
So I consulted and the result was
We granted his request.

PRINCE. And he, too, has watched the two nights past?

RUITEN. Aye, and he slept not
Though the samurai were heavy with sleep-fumes.

BUZEN. I will tell.

RUITEN. [_Elbows_ BUZEN _out of the way and comes forward._] You
are honorably hoarse.
He slept not, as I say--

PRINCE. How kept he awake?
Since many slept spell-bound
How broke he the spell?

RUITEN. With him he brought
Oiled paper and laid it
Down on the matting
Sitting upon it.
When o'er his eyes sleep stole
And wearily weighted them

He drew out his sharp dirk
And in his thigh thrust it
By pain driving the poppy fumes off.
Ever and again he twisted
The dirk in the raw wound
And the thick blood-drops
Soiled not the matting
Because of the oiled paper.

PRINCE. Indeed this is no common soldier,
This Ito Soda.

BUZEN. Indeed not--

RUITEN. To continue--[Retires upstage, disgruntled.]

BUZEN. [Pushing forward.] As I was saying, oh Prince,
His eyes never closed.
During the Reign of the Rat
He heard, in this room, O Toyo
Tossing and moaning
As if in great fear of something
She could not escape from.
Even at the same moment
As the beginnings of her moanings
Came a cat-call from the garden--
Then nearer--then ghostly paddings
As of padded claws on matting,
And an evil presence seemed hovering
And lurking near in the darkness.
O Toyo gave a low scream--than all was silence.
Soon she came stealthily
Through the shoji--cat-like her step--
Glassy her eyes--
Claw-like her hands--
Bent she over you with curled lips--
Then she turned, even as you have said,
And, seeing a waking watcher,
Left as she came.

RUITEN. [Comes down.] The second night of Ito Soda's watching
She threatened him in low words
But he made as to stab her
And she melted before him
Laughing a little.
And he heard the rustle of her garments
As she regained this room
Though he saw not her passage hither.

PRINCE. Thicker with each word the horror about me.
[_ Turns away to R. _] Doubts to beliefs--beliefs to actions--
Love unto hate. [_ Turns to them almost pleadingly. _]
Tell me it is not O Toyo.

BUZEN. I questioned her maid, Kashiku,
And found that O Toyo's couch
Was empty even at the time
Of the weird visit to thee.

PRINCE. [_ Overwhelmed. _] So, it was O Toyo!
In the soul of a flower, a demon--
On the sweet lips, poison.

BUZEN. There is only one course--

RUITEN. The one road--

PRINCE. And I take it!

BUZEN. [_ Moves toward door L. _] The samurai are gathered.

PRINCE. Summon Ito Soda. [BUZEN _exits L. _]

RUITEN. Hard is the fate of man
Here on this dark earth.
Many the shapes and the shadows
Stalking abroad.
Yet ever the gentle Buddha
From the Lotus Fields watches
And guards every life that lives.

PRINCE. [_ Puts one hand on _ RUITEN'S _shoulder. _] Priest, have
not many
Vampires bleeding them
And dream it is another thing?

RUITEN. The soul is often a vampire to the body.

PRINCE. And that evil thing must we kill.

ITO SODA. [_ Enters L., kneels before the _ PRINCE. RUITEN _takes up
R. a little and _ BUZEN _re-entering after _ ITO SODA _goes up C. _]
Honorable Prince, humbly I answer thy summons.

PRINCE. Rise, Ito Soda.
Faithful beyond words art thou,
This know I as all hath been told me.
No longer call thyself a common soldier

But a samurai of the Prince of Hizen.
And the two swords will I give thee on the morrow.

ITO SODA. On my knees I humbly thank thee. [_Rises._]

PRINCE. Now time presses.
O Toyo will be coming
In from the garden.
As usual shall the hundred sleepy samurai
Guard my couch. Let Ito Soda
Remain here hidden and watchful.
When O Toyo rises to enter my chamber--
Your dirk is sharp, Ito Soda?

ITO SODA. [_Draws dirk._] As a moonbeam on a cold night.

PRINCE. And you know how to use it.

ITO SODA. I will place this screen, thus. [_Goes to screen L.
and opens it so as to form a hiding place between the sleeping
mat and the door L._]
So will I wait the moment.

PRINCE. So be it. It is a good plan
And on the one road. Let us about it. [_Exits L. followed
by BUZEN and RUITEN. ITO SODA goes behind the screen._
O TOYO is heard singing in the garden._]

O TOYO. [_Outside._] Moonlit convulvus
Through the night hours
Wan are their faces
Ghostly sweet.

Richer by daylight
Drinking of sunshine
As thirsty souls drink
At a shrine.

Fair are the faces
Glassed in the quiet pools
Maidens low-bending
Vain ones.

[_The singing stops abruptly._] Kashiku, is not that a cat
Stealing stealthily there?
She snarls--quick--[O TOYO enters B. C. quickly and very
frightened, turns and looks back, hurries KASHIKU in._
KASHIKU follows much less disturbed at any fear of a cat
than over her mistress' fright._]

KASHIKU. [_Shuts the shoji R. C. and comes to_ O TOYO.] You are all atremble.

O TOYO. Quick, let me be safe in slumber. [_Crosses to dressing table._]

KASHIKU. [_Follows her and attends to her hair while_ O TOYO _kneels before the glass._] Several nights lately have I heard my lady moaning
As though even in sleep were she troubled.
The worry over your honorable lord hath disturbed thee.

O TOYO. Your ears are over keen.
I am happy when I sleep.
How can I moan, being happy?
You are dull.

KASHIKU. Perhaps it was the wind or the echo of my lord's moaning.

O TOYO. Moaning or was it singing?
I would it were singing
For singing is sweeter
On the lips of those dying.

KASHIKU. Dying?

O TOYO. When those whom we love are passing--
Even under our hands are passing--
And our love weans them from life
And our kisses suck out the blood-life,
Then would we touch them no more,
Then would we kiss them no more,
But a power greater than we
And a power that we fear
Forces us on in our love-killing.

KASHIKU. There is in your voice a vibration, as even the winds in the pine-tops
When, in the autumn, they echo the summer's death-song;
There is in your eyes a strange light as if the soul of another
Looked out from your curtaining lashes and dimmed the sweet light there abiding.
Oh, mistress, surely you are different than what you once were.

O TOYO. [_Crosses C. slowly._] Even now comes the hour and the struggle
And I do the bidding of that which is in me.
How I hate the feel of his flesh

Quivering under my lips
And the loathsome taste of the blood-drops
Thick on my lips that would soothe him and cannot.

KASHIKU. Can anything soothe more than thy lips,
More than the lips that love him?
I cannot understand the words of your saying.
You are happy and tearful all in a moment,
Your soul seems a sky full of sunshine and clouds.
[_ Coming to her._] Even now as my hand touches you, you are
trembling.
Is it the cat that crept upon us
Whose shape still affrights you?

O TOYO. Thou hast said it--My soul is as thou sayest.
My dreams are sweet and again bitter.
Once came a dream horrible above all dreams.

KASHIKU. What dream, my lady?

O TOYO. The night when you found me there on the floor.
Do you remember?

KASHIKU. Well. You were all distraught and the bosom of your gown
Was torn open and you clutched your throat
As if you were wounded there. But there was no mark.
And you let wild words fall from your lips
And none knew their meaning.

O TOYO. The Prince and I walked in the garden
And there at the shoji I left him.
As I entered
There entered
With me a spirit
And its breath fell upon me--
Dumb my tongue in my mouth
And frozen my marrow.
Suddenly it leapt upon me
And as I fell downward
Flashed the spirit into mine eyes--
A cat, two-tailed and hairy--
And its teeth sank in my throat here--
Can you see a mark? [_ Exposes her throat to _ KASHIKU.]

KASHIKU. The skin is as smooth as satin and perfect.

O TOYO. Then came darkness upon me--and so you found me.
So strong is the dream within me
I wonder if it be a dream or no.

KASHIKU. You had walked that evening in the garden.

O TOYO. I had rather dreamed I walked--say I dreamed it.

KASHIKU. The Prince was with--

O TOYO. Yet it was a dream, question it not.

I would go to rest peacefully.

He, too, shall rest peacefully--

I shall not kiss my lord tonight. [_Crosses L._]

KASHIKU. Not kiss him?

O TOYO. I think not I shall kiss him.

I would not pain his slumbers--

He has paled so and his face is so thin.

In the night he lies like a strong flower

And a strange flower, bled of its life--

Like a strong flower weakened.

And at its sight my dreams are bitter.

But as I gaze a change comes over all things

And I hold in my hands a beautiful flower

Which I kiss with my lips

Holding my lips long to it,

Draining its sweetness.

And a cloud passes over

And on my lips are clots of blood!

KASHIKU. Such dreamings are not good.

I find the silken coverlets tossed in the morning,

Twisted and thrown about as if you slept ill.

O TOYO. It is not O Toyo who tosses them--

It is the dream O Toyo.

KASHIKU. Two nights lately have I imagined you called to me

But entering you were not here--but there with your lord soothing
his sufferings.

O TOYO. Drinking at strange fountains and unknown springs--

Drinking of sacred waters sacred to unknown gods.

And as I drink another life becomes my life

And he is mine--utterly mine, at last!

KASHIKU. You frighten me--

O TOYO. Be not frightened--you have no need.

Now I shall sleep.

He, too, is sleeping. Perhaps--perhaps he is suffering.
Shall I touch him with my hands?
Perhaps he is hungry for my kisses--
Shall I kiss him?

KASHIKU. It were a fitting thing to kiss thy lord.

O TOYO. You know not what you say, Kashiku.

KASHIKU. My lady--

O TOYO. You have not heard me say strange things, Kashiku.

KASHIKU. I have heard--

O TOYO. Nothing.

KASHIKU. Nothing, my lady.

O TOYO. Put out the lamps. [KASHIKU _blows out candles on
dressing table_.]
Go now, Kashiku, and do you sleep deeply,
Breathing poppies.

KASHIKU. My lady--

O TOYO. Go. [KASHIKU _opens shoji R. and goes out shutting it
after her_. O TOYO _crosses, too, and lies on the sleeping
mat. The room is almost in total darkness._]

O TOYO. I shall kiss him--I shall kiss him! [_The lantern at
the head of the sleeping mat glows more and more brightly
until a cat's head appears on it. At this moment a cat-call
comes from the garden._ (NOTE.--If these effects cannot be
gotten with no hint of the ludicrous, have the lantern glow
with increasing light but use no cat's head or cat call.)
With the increase of light, O TOYO _has begun to moan and
toss and at the moment of the cat-call she rises as in a
trance and goes towards the door L. As she passes the screen_
ITO SODA _steps out from behind it and plunges his dirk into
her back; she falls with a little, stifled cry. Instantly, in
utter darkness, the curtain falls._]

END OF THE PLAY.